

Eagles receiver Terrell Owens



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RICHMOND (VA.) TIMES-DISPATCH/AP

U.S. soldiers help a wounded comrade after an insurgent attack on a dining facility during lunchtime Tuesday at Forward Operating Base Marez in Mosul. Officials said more than 20 people — a combination of U.S. military personnel, U.S. contractors, foreign national contractors and Iraqi army soldiers — were killed and dozens wounded.

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Capsized water taxi: A water taxi that flipped over in Baltimore's Inner Harbor in March in a sudden storm had too much weight aboard, according to a federal report.

Five passengers were thrown from the Seaport Taxi vessel and died when it capsized in winds exceeding 50 mph.

The National Transportation Safety Board, in a report released Monday, said operators of the 36-foot Lady D followed passenger limits set by the Coast Guard, but outdated weight estimates were used.

Michael Jackson trial: A judge denied a defense bid to delay Michael Jackson's child molestation trial, saying it would be "a huge step backward" and clearing the way for the trial to begin next month as planned.

In Santa Maria, Calif., Judge Rodney S. Melville also refused to dismiss the case for what his defense lawyers had argued was "vindictive prosecution and outrageous government conduct."

Jackson attorney Robert Sanger had asked Melville to postpone the trial. The trial was scheduled to begin Jan. 31.

Suspected Mafia graveyard: Remains recently discovered buried in a suspected Mafia graveyard in Queens, N.Y., were those of two mob captains who were murdered in 1981, the FBI said Monday.

An investigation by the FBI's Evidence Response Team and the city medical examiner determined the victims were Bonanno crime family captains Philip Giaccone and Dominick Trinchera, said Pasquale D'A-muro, head of the bureau's New York office.

Ohio voting machine investigation: Election officials in Hocking County, Ohio, watched as a technician repeated a repair he had made to a vote tallying computer, then announced they had found no evidence of any sort of tampering, despite a congressman's request for an FBI probe.

Observers, including a Green Party representative who had sought a presidential recount, agreed the procedure did not alter the Election Day vote total in the county, Hocking County Prosecutor Larry Real said.

Dick Clark's health: TV personality-producer Dick Clark will spend Christmas, and perhaps New Year's Eve, in a hospital where he's recovering from a mild stroke, his spokesman said Tuesday.



Filipino actor's death: Tens of thousands of Filipinos on Tuesday filed past the casket of Fernando Poe Jr. on the eve of his funeral, paying last respects to the actor-turned-presidential candidate who came to symbolize the aspirations of this country's poor. Authorities in the Philippines said security would be tight during an expected massive burial procession early Wednesday. Poe's widow, Susan Roces, asked mourners not to turn the funeral into a political event. Poe, 65, died of a stroke last week without conceding May's presidential election. His supporters still contend they were cheated by President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

Clark, who suffered the stroke Dec. 6, is out of the intensive care unit and "doing some rehab," said publicist Paul Shefrin.

He will remain hospitalized through Christmas, and he will be watching his New Year's Eve special either from his hospital bed or at home in Malibu, Calif., Shefrin said.

Seattle church-abuse lawsuits: The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Seattle has agreed to pay \$1.8 million to settle 12 claims of sexual abuse by priests, the majority involving a former pastor at several churches in the area.

Eleven of the settled cases involved the Rev. James McGreal, who was banned from the ministry and lives in a supervised church facility in Missouri.

The 12th claim involved the Rev. David Jaeger, who admitted in the mid-1990s that he inappropriately touched a 13-year-old boy at a youth camp in 1978. Jaeger is on administrative leave.

Business

AOL spam case: Federal prosecutors and a former America Online software engineer

have negotiated a tentative plea agreement over charges he stole more than 92 million e-mail addresses and sold them to Internet spammers, according to two people familiar with the case.

Jason Smathers, 24, of Harper's Ferry, W.Va., was scheduled to appear Tuesday in court. In exchange for a guilty plea by Smathers to violating the U.S. "Can Spam" law, prosecutors will recommend a fine and up to two years in prison, according to one person familiar with the agreement.

World

New Afghanistan Cabinet: President Hamid Karzai will demand that all members of his new Cabinet renounce their citizenship in any other country, despite a constitutional loophole that would allow them to serve for an interim period, his spokesman said Tuesday.

Many of Afghanistan's political elite have acquired U.S. or British nationality while living abroad during more than two decades of near-constant warfare. Some have been reluctant to give up their status, earning criticism that they lack faith in Afghanistan's future.

Stories and photo from wire services



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Subway

Coming soon to a base near you

BY GREG TYLER
Stars and Stripes

SAEBO NAVAL BASE, Japan — Joining locations in Camp Foster on Okinawa and Iwakuni Marine Corps Air Station in Japan, new Subway restaurants are set to appear soon on several other installations.

On Jan. 6, a new Subway is to open at Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan, said Louis Schelp, Navy Exchange District Food Operations manager.

"Eventually, we'll have two at Yokosuka. This one is in Building G-59 in the Main Street Food Court. After this one, the next will be opened in Sasebo and then one at Atsugi Naval Air Facility," he said.

Construction on the Sasebo Subway, in the Bayside Food Court, is to begin in February.

"Today the contractor was down at Bayside looking at the site," Sandra Papkin, Sasebo NEX general manager, said late Monday afternoon.

The Yokosuka Subway, as well as Subways at several other locations, will replace Robin Hood sandwich shops, a concept developed by the Army and Air Force Exchange Service.

Construction of the Yokosuka Subway is slated for February and March. It should be open before the arrival of our fleet," she added. Three ships operating from Sasebo — USS Harpers Ferry, USS Essex and USS Juneau — may return from deployment in the North Arabian Gulf shortly thereafter.

Schelp said Subway comes with strong brand recognition and a popular menu, including some health-conscious sandwiches and wraps.

"We are also going to offer breakfast in the new Subway opening in Yokosuka. It won't be the traditional bacon-and-eggs breakfast, but it will feature special breakfast sandwiches and the like. We'll see how that goes," he said.

Iwakuni Marine Corps Air Station's Marine Corps Community Service department opened a Subway in the Crossroads Mall this summer in a position also once occupied by a Robin Hood, a base spokeswoman said.

At Misawa Air Base on northern Japan, Subway will replace the Robin Hood in the food court near the main exchange. While remodeling for Subway, AAFES also plans to expand the adjacent Baskin-Robbins ice cream shop, according to base officials. Work on Subway is to begin in early spring 2005.

The Subway at Misawa is the only one AAFES plans to open on mainland Japan at this time, said Sgt. 1st Class Amanda Glenn, AAFES spokeswoman.

On Okinawa, a Subway opened in Camp Foster in November 2003. AAFES plans to open four more on Okinawa in 2005, an exchange spokeswoman said. The first to open is to be in the Olympic Shoppette on Kadena Air Base, she said, and is tentatively scheduled to open in February or March.

There is no specific schedule, the spokeswoman said, but camps Courtney and Keesler are to get Subways and Foster is to get a second one.

Brenda Borland from the AAFES general manager's office in South Korea said a Subway will open at the new BX mall at Osan Air Base and another at Camp Carroll.

Two Subways already operate at bases on the peninsula, including one at Camp Humphreys and another at Yongsan Garrison's Dragon Hill Hotel.

Fred Zimmerman, Jennifer H. Swan and Teri Weaver contributed to this report.
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Survey respondents want USFK

to get tough on sexual offenders

BY JOSEPH GIORANDO
Stars and Stripes

Harsher punishment for sex-assault offenders and separate barracks for male and female troops were two recommendations U.S. Forces Korea received from an online sexual assault survey it conducted earlier this year.

The survey, posted on the military's Intranet system in June, sought data on the number of incidents, perceived causes and possible prevention measures of sexual assault.

"This survey was conducted for USFK by the 8th Army Inspector General's office," read a command response to a Stars and Stripes request for the full survey and its results. The command refused to release the full results of the survey, but said the information collected "continues to be a source of valuable information in ongoing command attention" to the subject.

Army regulations state "fact-finding documents such as surveys are not released without approval from the U.S. Army Inspector General. The restriction is to protect the privacy and confidentiality of those providing information."

Stars and Stripes has submitted a request to the Army Inspector General at the Pentagon for a release of the full report.

Instead, USFK provided a "snapshot" of the results.

More than half of those surveyed recommended separate barracks for male and female servicemembers, USFK said. The majority of responses said punishment "needs to be harsher, applied quicker, equal no matter of rank, and publicized," USFK said.

In short, "the system needs to be more effective."

The majority of servicemembers also "want their leaders to regularly check barracks and check areas soldiers frequent, both on and off post, and be more visible available to soldiers," USFK said.

Without releasing the number of survey responses, USFK said the responses were 75 percent male and 25 percent female. More than half of the respondents were under the age of 31.

Soldiers completed 52 percent of the responses; Air Force personnel 44 percent; and Navy and Marines four percent. The ranks split almost evenly into thirds for categories between E-1 and E-4, E-5 and E-6, and E-7 to O-6, USFK said.

Survey respondents asked for extended hours for services such as gyms, base exchanges, movie theaters, community activities centers and buses.

USFK also said the survey results didn't influence a Dec. 1 decision to raise the legal drinking age for USFK personnel from 20 to 21.

"Leadership was already considering that measure, based on trend analysis," the USFK statement read. "The survey recommendation does support the decision."

Earlier this month on his radio call-in show, USFK Command Sgt. Major Troy Welch said the drinking site was raised in part because alcohol was involved in most sexual assault cases; in many instances, Welch said, victims were afraid to report incidents because they were underage and drinking at the time.

USFK said it was considering another survey as part of their future efforts to prevent sexual assaults.

"We plan to use a variety of methods, including surveys, interviews, sensing sessions and document reviews in the months ahead to continue studying this issue as the work of various leadership groups continues to focus on this important area," the statement read.

"Continued leader emphasis and training will have the greatest impact towards increasing awareness, knowledge, and prevention."

E-mail Joseph Giorando at: giorando@starsandstripes.com



Members of the South Korean navy salute while the Korean national anthem is played during welcoming ceremonies Sunday on Guam for three ships participating in the Republic of Korea Navy Cruise Training Force.

FRANK WHITMAN
Special to Stars and Stripes

S. Korean training ships visit Guam

Commander welcomes area residents aboard at last stop on 21,000-mile cruise

BY FRANK WHITMAN
Special to Stars and Stripes

GUAM — About 30 members of Guam's Korean community, including South Korea's consul general to Guam, Byung Kuck Jung, got a taste of home this week when the visiting Republic of Korea Navy destroyer Yangmunchon hosted them during a ceremony Sunday morning.

The ship, with mine laying ship Wonsan and supply ship Hwachoen, were on Guam for their 10th and final stop of a 99-day training cruise that's to have covered more than 21,000 miles.

"Guam is strategically a very critical area as far as the military is concerned," said Rear Adm. Sung-Gyue Oh, command-

er of the Cruise Training Force, speaking through an interpreter. "It's close to Korea and many Korean immigrants have come to here to live. It's very meaningful for us to visit Guam."

Crewmembers, including 175 midshipmen, took part in activities at every port visit, including the commemoration of the 140th anniversary of Korean immigration to Russia in Vladivostok, a similar 100th anniversary celebration in Mexico and a multicultural fair in Los Angeles.

"Our mission and concern is to encourage the Korean immigrant societies and also through diplomatic military relations to build friendship with visiting countries," said Oh.

On Guam, Oh and his staff paid courtesy visits to Rear Adm. Arthur J. Johnson, commander, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, and Governor Felix Camacho. They also held a brief wreath-laying ceremony at Guam's Korean War Memorial in Hagatna. Members of the local community, including the Korean Association of Guam, toured the ships and attended a reception hosted by Oh.

The ships were to depart Guam on Thursday, arriving in South Korea on Dec. 29. Upon their return, the midshipmen are to be commissioned.

"It's an important part of our program to raise our young generation in response to the strategic changes and concerns of the U.S.," Oh said. "This is why we visited the different places to study and give them insight into world affairs."

Naval leaders in Guam award new services contract

BY JULIANA GITTLER
Stars and Stripes

Naval leaders in Guam have awarded a new \$420 million service contract to a joint venture of three companies, replacing Raytheon, the contractor responsible for services for the past five years, officials said.

The new 10-year contract will provide support in 16 areas, including port services, facilities management, ordnance and public safety, said Naval Forces Marianas spokeswoman Lt. Arwen Conaul.

It was created to keep up with Guam's expanding Navy presence and new support and service needs. Morale, Welfare and Recreation and food services from restaurants and concessions are not included, she added.

Naval leaders awarded the contract to Day and Zimmerman Group, Parsons Infrastructure and Technology Group, and SKE Support Services.

The cost-plus-award-fee contract pays a base amount each year with the option for bonuses for exceptional work in each of the 16 areas. Military officials will evaluate the work monthly.

"Each area has military officers that oversee that particular functional area," Conaul said. The 10-year estimated total cost is \$423,453,152, according to a Navy release.

The contract can be renegotiated after a one-year base period, which starts in March, following a three-month turnover from Raytheon, Conaul said.

The new contract replaces a five-year-old Raytheon contract, created when the Navy began outsourcing many services to civilian contractors.

Civilian subcontractors were

hired to replace sailors working in several areas, such as public relations, galley food service and supply, to improve efficiency and cut costs.

Conaul said it is up to the incoming contractor to determine how many civilian contractor jobs will remain and who will fill those positions.

Officials at Raytheon would not disclose how many employees or contractors they currently employ.

The new contract was negotiated to replace an outdated one, not because of anything to do with Raytheon, Conaul said.

"We're steadily growing with personnel and commands," Conaul said. "The contract needed to be reviewed and updated."

As the Navy presence steadily expanded on Guam, more services were needed. The Navy now hosts three submarines and a Coast Guard cutter, as well as many port visits each year.

The Base Operations Support contract was put to bid through the Naval Facilities Engineering Command electronic solicitation Web site and received seven offers, according to a Navy statement.

Some of the contract companies currently work with the Navy or military. Day and Zimmerman provides logistics and support to the Military Sealift Command and operates a warehouse on Guam, according to the company's Web site.

Parsons helped design and build the Guam International Airport and is helping to disarm bombs at Andersen Air Force Base.

SKE Support Services holds several defense department contracts.

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Mochi makers



Courtesy of the U.S. Air Force

Chief Master Sgt. Franklin Smith, 35th Fighter Wing command chief at Misawa Air Base, Japan, pounds "mochi" with a wooden mallet while his wife, Terry Smith, looks on during an annual ceremony Monday at the Japan Air Self-Defense Force dining facility at Misawa. Mochi is made by pounding "mochigome," a special type of cooked glutinous rice. It is a Japanese custom to eat mochi during the holiday season.

BY JENNIFER H. SVAN
AND HANA KUSUMOTO
Stars and Stripes

Calling home for the holidays just got a bit cheaper for some phone customers in mainland Japan and Okinawa.

KDDI Corp. has reduced calling rates from on base to the United States from 6 yen to 5 yen a minute. Calls to the States — in dollars — now cost about 5 cents a minute. A two-hour call to mom or dad on Christmas Day would cost about \$6 instead of \$7.20.

The real savings, though, is on calls on base to cellular phones anywhere in Japan. They now cost 13 yen (about 13 cents) per minute instead of 17 yen (about 17 cents) per minute.

The rates went into effect Dec. 1 at Camp Zama near Tokyo, Misawa Air Base in northern Japan and on Okinawa bases, said Shinjuku Kurita, Tokyo regional sales department managing director for KDDI Okinawa Corp. The price change was rolled out at

Iwakuni teens win scholarships

The Marine Corps Community Services Youth and Teen Center at Iwakuni Marine Corps Air Station, Japan, announced Tuesday that two base teens won \$1,000 Presidential Freedom Scholarships.

The Presidential Freedom Scholarship program spotlights service, leadership and citizenship by students. The Iwakuni Youth and Teen Center, an affiliate of Boys & Girls Clubs of America, nominated Thomas Williamson, presently at Morehouse College in Atlanta, and Jarman M. Thompson, a senior at Matthew C. Perry High School in Iwakuni, for their outstanding leadership and service.

Both teens dedicated time and efforts to the Iwakuni community.

In addition to the scholarship, the two will receive certificates from President Bush and a student service gold pin.

New Year's Eve Bash in Iwakuni

IWAKUNI MARINE CORPS AIR STATION, Japan — The New Year's Eve Bash and Tournament at the Bowling Center is planned for 8 p.m. until 2 a.m. on Dec. 31.

The bash features food and refreshments including turkey, ham and all the trimmings. Miller Beer is providing numerous prizes and gift certificates. Organizers plan a drawing for door prizes.

The tournament is open to the first 70 bowlers with SOFA status, and tournament players finishing first through third win prizes. The cost is \$25.

Call DSN 253-4657 or 253-3495 for more information.

From staff reports

Call home for less this holiday season

Iwakuni Marine Corps Air Station in southern Japan Oct. 1 and at Yokota Air Base Nov. 1, Kurita said.

KDDI Corp. does not service Navy bases. The corporation wants to reduce its calling rate to the States in time for the holidays, Kurita said, because that's when many customers make international calls.

"The price drop for calling cell phones from on-base phones was dropped significantly since use of cell phones have spread," Kurita said. He noted that KDDI doesn't adjust its prices regularly, though the company tries to reduce rates at "effective times" such as the holidays.

Officials said they didn't know how long the new rates would be in effect.

Calls to cell phones in Japan will be charged 65 yen at 30 second increments, said Airman 1st Class Gabriel Ruiz of Misawa's 35th Communications Squadron. Before, customers using any portion of a minute were charged for the entire minute.

E-mail Jennifer H. Svan at: svan@starstripes.osd.mil
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RICHMOND (VA) TIMES-DISPATCH/AP

A hole in the roof of a tent at Forward Operating Base Marez lights the smoke moments after an attack on a dining facility Tuesday in Mosul, Iraq. U.S. officials said at least 20 people were killed and 57 were wounded in the attack, occurring as troops had just sat down for lunch.

U.S. base in Mosul attacked

19 GIs among at least 20 killed; 57 hurt in attack

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Nineteen U.S. soldiers were killed in an attack on a U.S. and Iraqi base near the northern city of Mosul, the U.S. military said.

Three other soldiers of unknown nationality also died, a military spokesman said in Baghdad. It was the deadliest single incident for U.S. troops since the start of the war in Iraq.

The explosion ripped through a mess tent at a military base near Mosul where hundreds of U.S. soldiers had just sat down to lunch, officials said.

A radical Muslim group, the Ansar al-Sunnah Army, claimed responsibility for the deadliest attack on a U.S. base in Iraq.

Casualty reports fluctuated throughout the day, with military officials and others giving conflicting figures.

Col. Steven Boylan, spokesman for the Coalition Press Information Center, the military head-

quarters in Baghdad, said 19 U.S. troops were killed, along with three other soldiers of unknown nationality, and that 57 people were wounded. Lt. Col. Paul Hastings, however, said about 20 people died, including 14 American troops, and about 60 were injured.

"The number is very chaotic, we've had different numbers," Hastings said. The dead included U.S. military personnel, U.S. contractors, foreign national contractors and Iraqi army, said Brig. Gen. Carter Ham, commander of Task Force Olympia in Mosul. The attack came the same day that British Prime Minister Tony Blair made a surprise visit to Baghdad and described the ongoing violence in Iraq as a "battle between democracy and terror."

Officials could not break down the toll of dead or wounded among the groups. Reports also differed as to the cause of the blast at the camp, which is based outside the predominantly Sunni Muslim city about 200 miles north of Baghdad.

Halliburton spokesman Wendy Hall said seven of the dead were from its KBR subsidiary or its subcontractors. Halli-

burton and its subcontractors have lost 62 personnel while performing services under contracts in the Kuwait-Iraq region, she said.

The base, also known as the al-Ghaziani military camp, is used by both U.S. troops and the interim Iraqi government's security forces. It also is used by members of the Stryker Brigade, based at Fort Lewis, Wash., a military official said.

Although officials initially said rockets or mortar rounds struck the camp, Hastings said it was still under investigation.

"We do not know if it was a mortar or a place explosive," he said, describing it as a "single explosion."

Bill Nemitz, a columnist with the Portland Press Herald based with the Maine National Guard's 133rd Engineer Battalion, told CNN there was a concrete dining hall under construction that was supposed to be finished by Christmas.

The Ansar al-Sunnah Army claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement on the Internet. It said the attack was a "martyrdom operation" targeting a mess hall in the al-Ghaziani camp.

Ansar al-Sunnah is believed to be a fundamentalist group that wants to turn Iraq into an Islamic state like Afghanistan's former Taliban regime. The Sunni Muslim group claimed responsibility for beheading 12 Nepalese hostages and other recent attacks in Mosul.

'I can't hear,' one soldier cried out

Editor's note: Jeremy Redmon, a Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch reporter embedded with U.S. troops, was at Forward Operating Base Marez when it came under attack.

BY JEREMY REDMON

Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MAREZ, Iraq — It was a brilliant, sunny day with blue skies and warmer than usual weather in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul.

Hundreds of U.S. soldiers had just sat down for lunch in their giant chow hall tent.

It was about noon Tuesday when insurgents hit their tent with a suspected rocket attack, killing at least 20 people, including two soldiers from the Richmond-based 276th Engineer Battalion. Fifty-seven people were reported wounded; civilians may have been among them.

The force of the explosions knocked soldiers off their feet and out of their seats. A fireball enveloped the top of the tent, and shrapnel sprayed into the men.

Amid the screaming and thick smoke that followed, quick-thinking soldiers turned their lunch tables upside down, placed the wounded on them and gently carried them into the parking lot.

Medics rushed into the tent and hustled the rest of the wounded out on stretchers.

Scores of troops crammed into concrete bomb shelters outside.

Others wobbled around the tent and collapsed, dazed by the blast.

"I can't hear! I can't hear!" one female soldier cried as a friend hugged her.

Near the front entrance to the chow hall, troops tended a soldier with a gaping head wound. Within minutes, they zipped him into a black body bag. Three more bodies were in the parking lot.

Soldiers scrambled back into the hall to check for more wounded.

The explosions blew out a huge hole in the roof of the tent.

Puddles of bright red blood, lunch trays and overturned tables and chairs covered the floor.

Sgt. Evan Byler, of the 276th, steadied himself on one of the concrete bomb shelters. He was eating chicken tenders and macaroni when the bomb hit. The blast knocked him out of his chair. When the smoke cleared, Byler



SOURCE: ESRI

took off his shirt and wrapped it around a seriously wounded soldier.

Byler held the bloody shirt in his hand, not quite sure what to do with it. "It's not the first close call I have had here," said Byler, a Fauquier County, Va., resident who survived a blast from an improvised explosive device while riding in a vehicle earlier this year.

Byler started walking back to his base when he spotted a soldier collapse from shock on the side of the road. Byler and Lt. Shawn Otto, also of the 276th, put the grieving soldier on a passing pickup truck.

The 276th, with about 500 troops, had made it a year without losing a soldier and is preparing to return home in about a month.

"We almost made it. We almost made it to the end without getting somebody killed," Otto said.

At least two other soldiers with the 276th were injured, but it was not clear how serious their wounds are.

Maj. James Zoller, the unit's acting commander, spoke to more than a dozen of his officers in a voice thick with emotion. He urged them to keep their troops focused on their missions.

"This is a tragic, tragic thing for us, but we still have missions," he told them. "It's us, the leaders, who have to pull them together."

Zoller eventually turned the emergency meeting over to Chaplain Eddie Barnett. He led the group in prayer.

"Help us now, God, in this time of this very tragic circumstance," Barnett said. "We pray for your healing upon our wounded soldiers."

With heads hung low, the soldiers trudged outside. He said they work to do.

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Gitmo interrogators may have posed as FBI

BY JOHN J. LUMPKIN
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon is investigating new allegations by a civil liberties group that military interrogators at the U.S. prison at Guantanamo Bay posed as FBI agents while using abusive techniques to question detainees.

The American Civil Liberties Union released e-mails that showed FBI officials disapproved of the practice and suggested the military interrogators posed as FBI agents in part to take advantage of the rapport the FBI had established with some detainees at the prison.

The e-mails, obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, also describe some harsh interrogation techniques and a suggestion they were approved by President Bush — a charge the White House vigorously denied.

Pentagon investigates ACLU claims

Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman said posing as FBI agents is not on a list of interrogation methods approved by Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld.

The White House denied a suggestion in an FBI e-mail dated May 22 that Bush personally signed off on certain interrogation techniques in an executive order. The FBI declined comment.

The military operation at Guantanamo Bay has come under increased scrutiny as former prisoners have alleged they were tortured. The Pentagon maintains it runs a humane operation there, and says all allegations of abuse are investigated.

The ACLU's latest disclosures primarily constitute e-mails between FBI officials whose names the government removed be-

fore releasing them. In several, the writers describe and criticize various interrogation techniques they say they witnessed at Guantanamo.

In one of the e-mails message, dated from August, the writer reports more than once witnessing prisoners chained to the floor in a fetal position, with no food or water. They had often soiled themselves.

On one occasion, the temperature in a room was lowered so much the barefooted detainee shivered. In another, the room was so hot the detainee had pulled out some of his hair before passing out.

In one e-mail, the writer described seeing a "detainee sitting on the floor of the interview room with an Israeli flag draped

around him, loud music being played and a strobe light flashing."

Another Guantanamo prisoner has, in a court petition, described detainees wrapped in Israeli flags, among other allegations. At the time, a Guantanamo Bay spokesman denied his statements.

While military interrogators are performing much of the questioning at Guantanamo, the FBI and CIA also have operations there.

Anthony Romero, executive director of the ACLU, says the FBI documents continue to show the U.S. government was "torturing individuals in some instances" and demonstrates a major rift between FBI agents and the military over proper interrogation techniques.

"There was real concern within our law enforcement community about whether we are torturing individuals," Romero said.

One SEAL acquitted, second put on probation in abuse cases

BY SETH HETTENA
The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — A Navy SEAL has been acquitted of charges that he beat a handcuffed and hooded terror suspect who later died, while a second commando received probation for assaulting another prisoner, attorneys for the men said.

The first SEAL, a first-class

petty officer, was found not guilty of assault and dereliction of duty Thursday in a nonjudicial proceeding known as a captain's mast, his attorney, Jeremiah Sullivan, said Monday.

The other commando, a second-class petty officer, was convicted Friday of assault and received six months probation, said his attorney, Milt Silverman.

Both hearings, closed to the pub-

lic, were held before SEAL Capt. James O'Connell at Naval Special Warfare Command in Coronado, outside San Diego.

The Navy has not released the names of the accused SEALs and a Navy spokesman said privacy laws prevented him from commenting. The two were members of SEAL Team Seven, based in Coronado, and were involved in joint CIA-special forces missions.

The first SEAL was accused of punching and kicking prisoner Marnad al-Jamadi and appearing in a photo in which the hooded and handcuffed detainee was allegedly humiliated.

Al-Jamadi, a suspect in the bombing of a Red Cross facility, was captured during a CIA-special forces mission in November 2003 and died a short time later in Abu Ghraib prison outside Baghdad.

The second SEAL was accused of trying to subdue a detainee during a CIA interrogation by putting him in a headlock. The detainee was suspected of supplying explosives and weapons to insurgents attacking U.S. troops in Iraq.

The SEAL was cleared of charges of appearing in a photo taken in December 2003 in which another hooded and handcuffed terror suspect was allegedly humiliated.

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Polls: Americans support staying in Iraq

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Despite growing doubts, most Americans still support keeping U.S. military troops in Iraq until the country is stabilized, according to polls released Monday.

More than half — 56 percent — say the United States should keep troops in Iraq until it is stable, according to a poll by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press. Forty percent said troops should be brought home as soon as possible.

That's about the same level of support that Pew has found all year for keeping troops in Iraq until it's stabilized. An ABC News-Washington Post poll got essentially the same results.

"Even for critics of the decision to go to war, pulling out is seen as further increasing risks of terrorism and raising the threat to the United States."

Andrew Kohut

Pew Research Center director

"Even for critics of the decision to go to war, pulling out is seen as further increasing the risks of terrorism and raising the threat to the United States," said Andrew Kohut, director of the Pew Research Center.

Four in 10 said they approve of the way the United States has handled the situation in Iraq, while almost six in 10 disapprove,

according to a CNN-USA Today-Gallup poll. A year ago, almost two-thirds approved of the way Iraq was being handled.

Half in the Gallup poll say the situation is worse than a year ago, while 20 percent say it's better. People were evenly divided on whether more troops should be sent to Iraq to help with upcoming elections.

About four in 10, 42 percent, in the ABC

News-Washington Post poll said they approve of Bush's handling of Iraq, while 57 percent disapprove. Six in 10 said the elections scheduled for late January should be held on schedule, even though most say Iraq is not ready for the elections to be held.

The Pew poll of 2,000 adults was taken Dec. 1-6 and has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 2.5 percentage points, larger for subgroups. The Gallup poll of 1,002 adults was taken Dec. 17-19 and the ABC-Post poll of 1,004 adults was taken Dec. 16-19.

Both the Gallup and ABC polls have a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.



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Financial company flooded by e-mails

BY LEO SHANE III

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Lawyers handling refunds in the First Command Financial Planning case have received hundreds of e-mails in the past week regarding the payouts, mainly from troops serving overseas.

Wayne M. Secore, the attorney administering the restitution program, said his staff is working to respond to those soldiers and other affected by the case as quickly as possible.

But troops have until March 15 to recoup their losses, which he said leaves plenty of time for officials to handle the requests. In addition, that deadline can be extended if troops can't file in time because of unusual hand-inship, such as serving in a combat zone, he said.

Last week, First Command agreed to refund about \$4 million to certain customers who bought mutual funds from the firm between 1999 and this year.

The company mostly caters to military personnel, and securities

investigators accused them of misleading investors about service charges in their systematic investment plans.

The company no longer offers those investments, officials announced last week.

First Command's other financial services — such as life insurance and banking programs — were not affected by the settlement.

The refunds will be available only to customers who bought and sold their systematic investment plans between 1999 and this year, Secore said.

Eligible individuals should be receiving letters detailing how to obtain the payouts in the next few weeks.

Secore said troops with additional questions can contact him at score@scorewall.com.

Investors who still hold their First Command plans may be eligible for arbitration to recover certain service fees.

Those claims will be handled through the National Association of Securities Dealers, the brokerage industry's self-policing organization.

E-mail Leo Shane at: shane@stripes.osd.mil

Coffee in self-heating can to hit shelves soon

BY PATRICK DICKSON

Stars and Stripes

Workers in the United States can see their morning commute as a battle.

Soon they'll have technology similar to what the military is using to aid the fight.

USA Today reported in its Monday editions that beginning Jan. 2, consumers

can buy a 10-ounce container of Wolfgang Puck gourmet latte at the store and heat it by pressing a button, without using electricity or appliances.

How does the can do it? A single step mixes calcium oxide (quicklime) and water. It heats the coffee to 145 degrees in six minutes — and stays hot for 30 minutes.

It's much like a technology being tested by Natick Soldier Systems for inclusion in Meals, Ready To Eat. The "hot beverage bag" is to be fielded in 2005.

The military's version is less bulky, is disposable and carries no "flame signature," that is, cannot be detected by an enemy.

Puck is the owner of Los Angeles eateries Spago and Chinois. He has licensed his name to WP Beverage Partners, a beverage firm. WP has linked up with On-Tech, a technology specialist, that designed the heating process.

Nestlé has tested a similar technology with Nescafé in Europe, and smaller companies have tested it in Asia.

"We investigated that technology 15 years ago," said Daine Wood, a scientist with the Combat Feeding Directorate in Natick, Mass. "They used it for sake (an alcoholic beverage) in Asia. Commanders got it from a vending machine on the train and had a drink on the way home."

Retail grocer Kroger is so convinced the product will be a hit, it will offer the cans in its 2,530 stores — and negotiated a deal to be the only seller until mid-February.

"There's nothing like it on the market," says John Spalding, who oversees all sales at Kroger, told USA Today.

The Defense Commissary Agency could not say whether they would try to carry the item. Army and Air Force Exchange Service spokesman Judd Anstey said AAFES is in the process of contacting the vendor to see what the plans are for selling to other troops.

The Puck coffee will retail for about \$2.25.

E-mail Pat Dickson at: dickson@stripes.osd.mil



Wolfgang Puck self-heating gourmet latte



Soldiers of Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division Stryker Brigade Combat Team run past a Stryker vehicle during Operation Indy in Mosul, Iraq, on Nov. 11.

JEREMIAH JOHNSON/Courtesy of the U.S. Army

Officials look to give Stryker a face lift

BY LISA BURGESS

Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — Army officials learned some important lessons when its first Stryker Brigade Combat Team deployed to Iraq this fall that are helping the 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team from Wainwright, Alaska, due to go into the country next summer.

Soldiers have suggested small improvements that have already been made, such as new seat belts and interior hand-holds.

But there are larger issues still at stake, such as shaving the vehicle's weight, its potential to rollover and trap soldiers, and whether the current "cage" armor is effective, critics say.

Army leaders recently attempted to change such impressions by holding a media video teleconference with a dozen Stryker commanders from four locations.

Lt. Col. Steven Townsend, commander of the 3rd Brigade, 2 Infantry Division who spoke from Fort Lewis, Wash., called the Stryker "a heck of a vehicle."

"Soldiers know this vehicle is not perfect, they do know and believe it's the best vehicle available and they have it to use today," Townsend, whose was the first Stryker Bri-

gade Combat Team to deploy to Iraq, in October 2003, said during the roundtable.

Commanders at the 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, which is due to go into the country next summer, are busy using lessons learned from the first Stryker brigade in Iraq, brigade commander Col. Michael Shields said during the roundtable.

The lessons learned from their predecessors "are really helping," Shields said.

Many of the lessons are simple, such as the need for additional handholds welded inside the Stryker.

Commanders in Iraq also realized that the original seat belts were not long enough to accommodate a soldier wearing the new individual body armor and other bulky items on his person.

With the seat belts uncomfortably tight, soldiers simply were not strapping in while the vehicle was moving, commanders said, increasing the danger during collisions, explosions or rollovers.

With new seat belts, the problem has been solved, Fuller said.

Commanders in Iraq also determined that the Stryker's "bird cage" slatted armor was not making the common armored vehicle issue of rollovers, even worse.

The armor, designed to defeat rocket propelled grenades, acts like a baseball catcher's mask: the explosives bounce off or do damage to the armor, not the vehicle.

The cage armor also is sufficiently effective to withstand most improvised explosive devices, or IEDs, and RPGs, another question raised by critics in the past, Army leaders said.

Lt. Col. Gordie Flowers, commander of 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, said during his year in Iraq, more than 50 percent of his Strykers were hit with rocket propelled grenades and IEDs, "The No. 1 and No. 2 weapons used against us," with no resulting fatalities.

The slat armor may be effective, but at 4,500 pounds, it does unquestionably and significantly add to the Stryker's basic 19-ton weight.

And weight remains a serious issue for the Stryker brigade, which Army planners originally said would have the capability of deployment by C-130 transport aircraft, anywhere in the world within 96 hours.

"The C-130 transportability remains an important metric, and we'll continue to pursue it," Fuller said. "We're working to reduce the [Stryker's] weight."

E-mail Lisa Burgess at: burgess@stripes.osd.mil

IN THE WORLD

Settlers compare Gaza pullout to Holocaust

BY JOSEF FEDERMAN
The Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Some Jewish settlers said Tuesday that they will be wearing orange Star of David patches — similar to those the Nazis forced Jews to pin to their lapels — in an escalation of protests against a planned Gaza withdrawal.

The campaign stirred an uproar in Israel, which gave refuge to large numbers of Holocaust survivors after World War II. About 250,000 survivors still live in Israel, and mention of the Nazi genocide in a public forum remains an extremely sensitive subject.

Settler activists in Gaza said they would distribute the orange stars this weekend, although a handful of Gaza residents displayed the badges on Tuesday.

"We want to shock the nation," said Miriam Freeman, a 67-year-old Holocaust survivor who lives in the Neve Dekalim settlement in Gaza.

They succeeded quickly, touch-

ing a raw nerve. Images of a Gaza woman wearing the star on her lapel ran on the front page of an Israeli newspaper, and radio shows discussed the settler campaign nonstop.

Former Israeli Chief Rabbi Israel Meir Lau denounced the initiative. "Spare us this return to the nightmares of the past and leave the Holocaust in its proper place," he said. "The deliberate murder of six million Jews is such a sacred and significant thing that it cannot be compared with absolutely anything else in the world." Lau is a Holocaust survivor.

The official Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial center urged the settlers to refrain from using the stars. The Simon Wiesenthal Center, a human rights group that focuses on Holocaust issues, accused the settlers of cheapening the memory of Holocaust victims.

"The Nazi term 'resettlement' was to take Jews from their homes to be mass murdered. They're trying to create imagery



Supporters of the Israeli settler movement join arms Monday as they sing following a news conference in Jerusalem. Israeli settler leaders on Monday backed a call to resist the planned evacuation of settlements in the Gaza Strip, comparing it to the Holocaust.

that this is the same resettlement," said Efraim Zuroff, head of the Wiesenthal Center's Jerusalem office, who himself lives in a West Bank settlement. "We're not headed to Auschwitz, with all due

respect."

Under Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan, Israel will withdraw from Gaza and a small part of the West Bank next year. The plan will uproot about 8,000 settlers.

Arafat mourning ends

RAMALLAH, West Bank — Marking the end of mourning for Yasser Arafat, his emerging successor said Tuesday that he remains committed to a peace deal with Israel that would produce a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as a capital.

Mahmoud Abbas spoke at Arafat's old headquarters, to which the Palestinian leader was confined for nearly three years until just days before his Nov. 11 death at a Paris hospital.

Abbas, the PLO chief, is the front runner in Jan. 9 elections to replace Arafat as Palestinian Authority president, which would seal his status as Arafat's successor.

"We are standing here today to reiterate to the world that we are committed to the choice of just peace, to achieve the rights of our people," Abbas said.

From The Associated Press

Catholic official says Bethlehem like a prison

BY GAVIN RABNOWITZ
The Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Bethlehem, the traditional birthplace of Jesus, has been turned into a large prison by the separation barrier Israel is building in the West Bank, the top Roman Catholic clergyman in the Holy Land said Tuesday.

Delivering his annual Christmas message, Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah also said Israelis and Palestinians must not miss the current opportunity for peace.

Sabbah spoke a day after the United Nations released a report on Bethlehem, describing it as an isolated town with boarded-up shops instead of a bustling cultural and spiritual center.

Urban Bethlehem, with a population of 61,000, is surrounded by a multitude of checkpoints and the barrier, which is nearing completion on two sides of the town. As a result, Bethlehem has become isolated from the rest of the West Bank and most importantly from Jerusalem which is only a few miles away, the U.N. report said.

"The Israeli authorities resumed the work to complete the wall, which makes Bethlehem a big prison," said Sabbah after delivering his Christmas message. He urged Israel to stop construction, and to halt its raids to arrest wanted militants.

Israeli says it is building the barrier, which sometimes dips deep into the West Bank, to keep out Palestinian suicide bombers who have killed hundreds of Israelis in the last four years of

fighting. "The fence is being built only because of the Palestinian terror," said Lior Ben Dor, an Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman.

Ben Dor said the barrier has already stopped dozens of bombers.

Palestinians say the barrier is an Israeli attempt to grab land the Palestinians claim for a state and has created havoc with the daily life for thousands of people.

"Bethlehem should be a free city," Sabbah, a Palestinian, told reporters, after reading his Christmas message in English and Arabic. "It is a symbol of peace, a symbol for all the Christian world and all humanity."

Sabbah said he hoped leaders on both sides have the courage to seize the opportunity for peace. "Neither of the two peoples is condemned to continue offering up its youths to death," he said in the Christmas message.

Sabbah said the onus was on Israel.

"Palestinian leaders are now preparing for the elections with great calm and have adopted plans for peace. Israeli leaders are invited to do likewise," Sabbah said.

Sabbah said that only an end to the Israeli occupation could bring peace.

"Ending the oppression and the humiliation of the Palestinians would at the same time put an end to the fear and insecurity of the Israelis," Sabbah said.

The Patriarch ended with words of hope. "Christmas is a promise of life, joy and dignity in the presence of God who has chosen our land to be his dwelling."



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Thais offer to prove militia claim

Bangkok says it has photos of separatists training in Malaysia

BY SUTIN WANNABOVORN
The Associated Press

BANGKOK, Thailand — Thailand's government said Tuesday it has photo evidence of Thai Muslim separatists undergoing militia training in neighboring Malaysia, days after Malaysian officials angrily denied such claims.

Meanwhile, two Buddhist teachers and a local official were shot dead in southern Thailand, where authorities say more than 570 people have been killed this in violence connected with a Muslim insurgency.

"We have the pictures to prove that they have militia training in Kelantan state," Thai Deputy Interior Minister Sutham Saengprathum told reporters.

The southern state borders Malaysia.

"If the Malaysian authorities want to have these (pictures) for their cooperation in investigating, we are pleased to give them to them."

Sutham Saengprathum
Thai deputy interior minister

Malaysia had lambasted Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra after he claimed last

week that Thai militants were being trained in Malaysia without the Malaysian government's knowledge.

Thaksin said news reports distorted his remarks.

Jakarta also reacted angrily when Thaksin said the insurgents were being brainwashed by radical ideologies from Indonesia.

Also Tuesday, Buddhist teacher Maanon Kojahoon, 52, died after he "was shot near the school amid dozens of students" in southern Pattani province, said police Capt. Theerachote Promha.

In the same province, two attackers on a motorcycle killed another Buddhist teacher, Sutee Meesaeasat, 46, as he was driving his motorcycle home after teaching Tuesday afternoon, said police Col. Chairat Su-

pachaiyasit.

In another attack, two men on motorcycle, armed with an AK-47 assault rifle, shot to death a local Buddhist official, Worawuth Limbuth, 32, in the Saiburi district of Pattani, as he was driving his pick-

up truck from the district administrative office, said police Capt. Somsak Wannawak.

In a fourth attack, an unknown number of assailants shot and injured a team of soldiers after they finished work building a Muslim prayer hall in Narathiwat's Sungai Padi district.

Most Thais are Buddhists, but Muslims form the majority in the country's southernmost provinces.

Government handling of this year's violence in the south has drawn fire here and abroad.

At least 85 southern Muslims died on Oct. 25, most from suffocation or crushing after security forces detained them after a protest, then crammed them into trucks.

Srisompob Chitpoomsri, a professor at southern Thailand's Songkhla Srinakarin University, said on Tuesday that government mismanagement has fueled the insurgency.

Srisompob said his statistics show there were 1,253 violent incidents in the south this year, but only 80 to 100 a year since 1993.

He placed the blame largely on Thaksin, saying the spike in violence began after the prime minister's government came to power in 2001.

Srisompob also blamed the surge on the south's deeply rooted separatist ideology.

The Sept. 11, 2001, attacks in the United States and the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq also have bolstered the local movement, he said, "paving the way for international terrorists to secretly creep in."

"But the government is totally deaf and blind to these things," Srisompob added.

Inmate escapes by wearing twin brother's garb

The Associated Press

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — Brotherly love was put to the test this week after two 18-year-old identical twins swapped their clothing and traded places so that one could escape jail.

But prison and police officials were not impressed by the gesture when one of the brothers, serving a 10-month sentence for assault and robbery, walked out to freedom.

The inmate walked out of the Kronoberg Jail, located in the same building that houses the headquarters for Stockholm's police department, undetected on Monday after a visit by his twin brother. The two siblings, neither of whom were named, managed to switch their outfits without anyone noticing.

After visiting hours ended, the inmate walked out, pretending to be his brother. Faced with the prospect of spending the night in jail, his brother admitted the ruse to prison guards.

"We knew there was a certain risk of a mix up, so we took some measures," said Lars-Aake Pettersson, the jail warden. "But this was apparently not enough. They managed to dupe us."

The only noticeable difference between the twins was a birthmark on the face of the one doing time, but that was taken care of with an ink pen.

The visiting brother was questioned and released, but he could face charges of aiding in a prison escape.

His brother's Police said he was still on the run.

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Chinese Night Thursdays

Seafood Night Fridays

Yama's Mexican Buffet Saturdays



Iraq mission extension unpopular in Japan

The Associated Press

TOKYO — Nearly 60 percent of Japanese voters are opposed to Tokyo's extension of its troop dispatch to Iraq, while three-quarters are not satisfied with the government's explanation of the policy, according to a poll published Tuesday.

The survey in the national Asahi newspaper said only 31 percent of the 1,868 voters questioned by telephone over the weekend supported the extended deployment of

some 550 troops to southern Iraq on a humanitarian mission.

Asahi said 76 percent of respondents said Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi had failed to adequately explain the decision to extend the troops' stay by another year. The poll also said 58 percent of voters were opposed to the move.

An Asahi poll in November showed support for the extension at 29 percent, and opposition at 62 percent.

Japan's pro-U.S. government extended

the mission on Dec. 9, despite opposition among Japanese voters. The troops are based outside the city of Samawah — will get caught up in the fighting or be targeted by insurgents.

Critics also say the deployment violates the spirit of Japan's pacifist constitution, which foresees the use of force to settle international disputes.

Koizumi, however, has argued that the dispatch is needed to help stabilize Iraq, secure vital Middle East oil flows to Japan,

and strengthen ties with top ally the United States.

The Asahi poll showed support for Koizumi's government at 37 percent, down slightly from 39 percent in November. Meanwhile, 47 percent said they opposed the Cabinet, up from 43 percent in November.

The newspaper, which published no margin of error for the poll, said it was the third time in a row that surveys showed disapproval ratings higher than approval for Koizumi's government.

God's help vital, says aging pope

The Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — Pope John Paul II alluded to his aging difficulties, saying in a Christmas address Tuesday that his passing year brings a stronger need for help from God.

The 84-year-old pontiff, who is slowed by Parkinson's disease and hip and knee problems, spoke to cardinals from his wheeled throne. Short of breath, he handed much of his speech to an aide to read.

Reflecting on the past year, the pontiff thanked Vatican cardinals for their help and affection. "The passing years make one feel an ever more intense need for help from God and from men," he said.

Despite his ailments, the pope is keeping to his usual challenging holiday schedule, which includes midnight Mass on Christmas Eve in St. Peter's Basilica.

His address Tuesday, in a marble room decked with Christmas garlands, was an overview of the year's work.

The pontiff highlighted efforts to promote unity between the various branches of Christianity, especially his attempts to break down



Pope John Paul II exchanges a Christmas greeting on Tuesday at the Vatican with members of the Roman Curia.

barriers with the Orthodox Church.

This year, the Vatican carried a Russian icon revered by the country's Orthodox community, then sent back the relics of two Orthodox saints taken from Con-

stantinople.

John Paul said he hopes such gestures would bring Christian denominations closer together. "It is urgent to re-establish full communion between Christians," he said.

Nations agreeing to united security in Mediterranean

BY JAMEY KEATEN

The Associated Press

PARIS — Defense ministers and leading military officials from 10 European and North African nations agreed Tuesday to step up security cooperation in the Mediterranean basin, choosing to focus first on improving maritime surveillance.

It was the first time that the so-called "5 plus 5" group of nations took on issues like curbing the flow of drugs and illegal immigrants toward Europe, fighting terrorism and joining forces to brace for natural disasters in the region.

"We must face jointly a certain number of challenges — the fight against terrorism, against the flow of various traffic and against ecological catastrophes," Defense Minister Michele Alliot-Marie of France said at a joint news conference after the two-hour meeting.

The initiatives, to begin next spring, are to focus first on maritime surveillance and how militaries can boost their roles in air security and natural disaster response, the group said in a joint statement.

The 10 nations plan to carry out joint military exercises to prepare for oil spills at sea, exchange experts' views on maritime surveillance and add a military role to border controls.

The ministers said delegations of military experts from the region would meet twice to oversee cooperation, and the ministers are to meet annually to check up on the efforts.

The group, composed of five North African nations and five European nations on the southern rim of the Mediterranean, was set up in 1990 as a means of holding an "informal dialogue" on concerns considered vital to the region.

Foreign ministers of the group met in Algeria last month, tackling issues such as illegal immigration and terrorism.

The forum is one of several that aims to bridge the gap between Europe and its neighbors on the other side of the Mediterranean. It aims to contribute to the security, surveillance, intelligence, of the sometimes volatile region and push forward a larger process of cooperation between Europe and its neighbors to the south.

Japan to meet with families before responding to N. Korea

BY CHISAKI WATANABE

The Associated Press

TOKYO — North Korea should immediately provide information on Japanese citizens it kidnapped in the 1970s and '80s, rather than waiting for Tokyo to set a deadline, the prime minister said Tuesday.

Japan has been demanding further details on the missing victims since human remains that Pyongyang claimed were those of two abductees were tested by Japanese experts, and turned out to be from other people.

North Korea in turn accused Japan of faking the DNA test results.

"We are reviewing the materials now, and as soon as the review is over, we will clarify what the problems are and urge sincere response from North Korea," Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi told reporters.

Asked if Japan will set a deadline for North Korea, he said: "Rather than setting a deadline, we want to hear their response as soon as possible."

North Korea has admitted kidnapping 13 Japanese citizens to be language teachers for spies, and allowed five of them to return to Japan in 2002. North Korea says the other eight have died, but has not yet provided proof, leading some in Japan to suspect some are still alive.

Officials said the government would consult with the families of missing abductees on Friday, then make a report to the North Koreans.

It was unclear whether Tokyo would try to arrange a meeting with the North Koreans in Beijing, which is a close Pyongyang ally, or elsewhere.

Koizumi has come under increasing pressure to impose economic sanctions on impoverished North Korea's regime to punish it for refusing to come clean on the kidnapping cases.

The Asahi newspaper published a poll Tuesday showing 63 percent of respondents favored sanctions. Koizumi, however, is pushing to give North Korea more time before taking such steps.

North Korea has said it would consider sanctions against it a "declaration of war."

New Harry Potter book to be released July 16

LONDON — The sixth novel in J.K. Rowling's blockbuster Harry Potter series, "Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince," will go on sale in Britain and the United States on July 16, publishers said Tuesday.

"We are delighted to announce the publication date," which also will take place in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, said the joint announcement by Nigel Newton, the chief executive of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc in England, and Barbara Marquardt, the president of Scholastic Children's Books in the United States. "J.K. Rowling has written a brilliant story that will dazzle her fans in a marvelous book that takes the series to yet greater heights. 'Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince' delivers all the excitement and wonder of her best-selling Harry Potter novels," they said.

The announcement not only pleased Rowling's millions of followers, it also delighted the markets.

Bloomsbury shares surged 7 percent to a new all-time high of \$5.69. Sales of Harry Potter titles have provided the company with a significant boost in the past, although in September it said the absence of a new Rowling release this year had held back its annual rise in profits to 4.5 percent at \$7.16 million.

Shares of Scholastic Corp. advanced \$1.27, or 3.5 percent, to \$37.20 on the Nasdaq Stock Market — within striking range of its 52-week high of \$37.24.

Rowling, 39, noted that while she is pregnant with her third child, she has had the time "needed to tinker with the manuscript to my satisfaction and I am as happy as I have ever been with the end result. I only hope you feel it was worth the wait when you finally read it."

From The Associated Press



Rowling

IN THE STATES

Pregnant victim, suspect seen at dog show

BY HEATHER HOLLING-SWORTH

The Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Kan. — Bobbie Jo Stinnett and the woman accused of strangling her and cutting her baby from her womb

were photographed together at a dog show months before last week's attack, a woman who attended the show said.

Stinnett, 23, was eight months pregnant when she was strangled Thursday at the home in Skidmore, Mo., where she and her hus-

band, Zeb, raised rat terriers.

Investigators used tips from other rat terrier enthusiasts and data from Stinnett's computer before arresting Lisa M. Montgomery, of Melvern, Kan., on Friday. Montgomery, 36, who claimed to have given birth to a girl the previ-

ous day, is charged with kidnapping resulting in death.

A photo gallery on Stinnett's own Web site — <http://www.imageevent.com/happyhaven> — includes pictures labeled as being from an April 2004 dog show in Abilene, Kan. One of the photos shows seven people holding rat terriers: Stinnett at the right, with a purple ribbon, and a woman who resembles Montgomery at the left. There is no caption.

But dog trainer Nancy Strudl, of Omaha, Neb., said Tuesday she was at the dog show. She said both Montgomery and Stinnett, as well as Stinnett's husband, Zeb, and one of Montgomery's daughters, are among the seven people in the picture.

On Monday, Montgomery's husband, Kevin Montgomery, said he believed that the baby his wife presented to him was theirs.

According to federal authori-

ties, Kevin Montgomery picked up his wife in Topeka on Thursday and drove her and the baby, whom they called Abigail, about 40 miles south to Melvern, where the couple showed her off.

After Lisa Montgomery made her first appearance in federal court Monday, Kevin Montgomery said, "I had no idea," when asked by reporters what he had known about his wife's alleged actions. He also expressed sympathy for Stinnett's family.

"This has to be as hard or harder on them as it is on me," he told reporters. "I sure hope they get as much support from their church and community as I have because we are all going to need it."

The baby, named Victoria Jo Stinnett, was released from the hospital Monday. Bobbie Jo Stinnett's funeral was planned for Tuesday.

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THE NEW SANNO



LONGMONT (CO.) DAILY TIMES-CALL/JP

Ken Wicklund cleans up the remains of a spruce tree that was blown down by high winds Monday in Longmont, Colo. Wicklund, a city forester, said the tree was about 50 years old.

Near 100 mph winds
create havoc in Colo.

BY ERIN GARTNER

The Associated Press

DENVER — Wind gusting to nearly 100 mph swept across Colorado on Monday, forcing skiers off the slopes, closing highways and peeling the roof off a high school gym while a basketball team practiced inside.

No serious injuries were reported, but the gusty weather dominated everything from driving to walking for much of northern and central Colorado.

Gusts reached 90 mph in Breckenridge and forced the ski resort to shut down a chair lift.

"We generally get pretty high winds before a storm moves in," resort spokeswoman Emily Jacob said. "We really pay close attention to that. It's a safety concern for us."

The National Weather Service issued a high-wind warning along the heavily populated Front Range after 95 mph winds were reported in Superior. Gusts reached 98 mph at Carter Lake

near Berthoud and ranged from 79 mph to 85 mph in Louisville, Boulder and Golden.

At Monarch High School in Louisville, several students escaped injury when a portion of the gym roof was torn off. The school was closed for winter vacation, though basketball players practicing inside had to be evacuated.

The wind overturned a small plane at a Denver-area airport and knocked an empty tractor-trailer on its side in Littleton, State Patrol Trooper Don Moseman said. The driver was treated for minor injuries.

Trees were blown down elsewhere in Louisville and a roof under construction at a new recreation center was peeled off, police said.

Authorities closed Colorado Highway 93 near the former Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant northwest of Denver for about an hour after winds knocked down a power line.

The winds eased as a cold front began to arrive.

President could get tougher with Putin

BY ANNE GEARAN

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The U.S. president who he looked into Vladimir Putin's soul three years ago and liked what he saw may take a dimmer view of the Russian president now. How to deal with the increasingly authoritarian leader is giving George W. Bush's administration a second-term headache.

Bush will meet with Putin in Slovakia in February, when he travels to Europe for fence-mending talks with allies who oppose the U.S.-led war in Iraq. Formal announcement of the meeting was expected Tuesday.

"Both Washington and Moscow are having some second thoughts at the moment," said Rose Gotsmoeller, a specialist on defense and nuclear issues in Russia and the other former Soviet states at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "They are trying to judge what the next four years can bring."

Several Russia analysts said Bush faces two vital decisions: Whether to take a harder line against erosion of democratic and economic freedoms in Russia; and how much to rely on personal diplomacy to resolve differences and deal with mutual problems such as the potential spread of nuclear weapons.

Gotsmoeller, for one, predicts the Bush administration will see little advantage in continuing the largely polite and muted response to Putin that characterized the last couple of years.

"We already see signs that they will be much more outspoken in problems they see with Putin, the cutting back of democratic reforms, the scaling back of press



President Vladimir Putin

freedoms," and moves to consolidate Russia's oil business and punish a former media baron who crossed Putin, Gotsmoeller said.

Putin startled the White House in recent weeks with vehement denunciations of the United States for what Putin called meddling in Ukraine. Bush and other Western leaders criticized election fraud in the former Soviet republic last month that favored a pro-Russian candidate. The United States also spent millions of dollars on the election but denied that amounted to interference.

Putin echoed Soviet-era rhetoric when he said U.S. influence abroad amounts to a "dictatorship." He also colorfully likened the United States to a "strict rule in a pith helmet."

"I think the president is probably surprised, disappointed and alarmed," said Rep. Curt Weldon, a Pennsylvania Republican, a close student of Russia.

Weldon said Bush bears some responsibility for the frayed relationship because he failed to follow through on proposals three years ago that would have strengthened economic and strategic ties between the two countries.

Bush has made much of his friendship with Putin and gave little indication during a Monday news conference that the two are at odds. As he has before, Bush referred to Putin as "Vladimir."

Critics say Bush exaggerates Social Security funding woes

BY LEIGH STROPE

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Critics of President Bush's plan to create personal investment accounts in Social Security say he is exaggerating the program's funding problems to boost public support for his idea.

"Social Security is like a car with a flat tire," said Peter Orszag, an economist at the liberal Brookings Institution and adviser in the Clinton White House. "There is a problem. We need to fix the flat tire. But we don't need to replace the car."

But David John, a senior analyst at the conservative Heritage Foundation, said the funding problem is real, especially for younger workers.

"Every day we delay raises the cost of a repair to Social Security," he said.

The retirement system faces a projected \$3.7 trillion, 75-year shortfall. Bush wants to overhaul the program to let younger workers divert some of their Social Security payroll taxes to personal accounts. But that alone won't fix the problem and could require upfront costs of \$1 trillion to \$2 trillion over 10 years.

Bush regularly claims Social Security faces a shortfall of nearly \$11 trillion, which, Orszag said, is a misleading figure because it makes the system appear to be in worse shape than it is.

The figure — \$10.4 trillion to be precise — is the shortfall over the "infinite horizon," as measured by Social Security's Board of Trustees. The calculation was included for the first time in the trustees' 2003 report, along with the required 75-year measure. The American Academy of Actuaries criticized the use of the \$10.4 trillion figure in the report, saying it was likely to mislead the public.

Orszag said Medicare's dwindling finances are more urgent than Social Security's. Medicare began dipping into its trust fund this year, and it is expected to be exhausted in 2019, trustees said.

Social Security's financial picture was little changed from last year. The system is expected to begin paying out more in benefits than it collects in taxes starting in 2018, with the trust fund money the government owes depleted by 2042.

Rep. Bob Matsui of California, the top Democrat on the House Social Security subcommittee, said the retirement system is not in crisis and "is a manageable problem."

Bush asked Monday at a year-end news conference about the need to address Medicare's funding problems first, said those issues were tackled with a sweeping Medicare package that includes a prescription drug plan being added in 2006 in addition to a number of lesser-known changes in the way the system operates. Depending on estimates, the government will spend from \$400 billion to \$535 billion on Medicare changes over the next 10 years.

Bush repeated his demand for congressional action on Social Security, but he refused to provide details.

"Don't bother to ask me," he said, making clear he would not engage in a public debate about Social Security until he gives Congress "a solution at the appropriate time."

The administration has said a plan is still being crafted.

"The temptation is going to be ... to get me to negotiate with myself in public. To say, you know, 'What's this mean, Mr. President?' What's that mean? I'm not going to do that," Bush said. "The law will be written in the halls of Congress. And I will negotiate with them, with the members of Congress."

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STARS AND STRIPES
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Texas still leads states in prisoner executions

BY MICHAEL GRACZYK

The Associated Press

LIVINGSTON, Texas — Texas remained the most active U.S. death penalty state in 2004 with 23 executions, down from a year ago and about average for the past decade. But legal experts and death penalty opponents suggest there are signs that increased judicial scrutiny is giving pause to juries and prosecutors considering capital punishment.

Earlier this year, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned two Texas death sentences — LaRoyce Lathair Smith and Robert Tennard — because jurors were not told of the defendants' learning disabilities.

The court also lifted the death sentence of Delma Banks, condemned nearly 25 years ago, and

criticized Texas officials and lower courts, saying prosecutors had crucial information that might have helped Banks' case.

"One thing that obviously affects both juries and prosecutors is an increasing sensibility that the Supreme Court is looking over their shoulder at the American death penalty," said Jordan Steiker, a University of Texas Law School professor.

Just this month, the high court for a second time heard arguments on whether a nearly all-white jury unfairly convicted and sentenced to death a black man, Thomas Miller-El, for the 1985 slaying of a Dallas motel clerk.

"We've been here almost 20 years," Miller-El said from death row. "Innocence almost doesn't matter at this point when they've taken your whole life away."

Drug makers to collaborate on single AIDS pill

By LINDA A. JOHNSON
The Associated Press

TRENTON, N.J. — Two drug companies announced Monday they will collaborate on developing the first all-in-one, one-a-day pill to treat HIV infection — a long-sought goal that would make it much easier for patients to stick with their medication.

Currently, the best AIDS treatment requires patients to take two to four pills a day. Less than a decade ago, many patients had to take 25 to 30 pills a day, often at precise times and under specific conditions such as with food, making it extremely difficult for patients to stick to the complex schedule. Missing doses makes it easier for the virus to mutate and become resistant to medication.

In the first collaboration by competing AIDS drug makers, Bristol-Myers Squibb Co. and Gilead Sciences Inc. formed a joint venture to test and market a single pill combining three widely used medicines from two different classes of AIDS drugs.

Because the three individual drugs already are on the market, the one-a-day combination could be approved and on sale as soon as the second half of 2006, said David Rosen, a spokesman for Bristol-Myers Squibb.

"To have it all in a single pill is terrific," Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, told The Associated Press.

The combination pill will include Sustiva,

made by Bristol-Myers Squibb. It also will include two AIDS drugs made by Gilead Sciences of Foster City, Calif.: Viread and Emtriva.

The latter two drugs are from the same class of AIDS drugs, but they block copying of the AIDS virus at two different points early in its replication cycle. Sustiva is from a different class of drugs and attacks the virus later in the cycle.

The two companies will have to combine the component drugs so that the single pill is absorbed the same, has identical effects, lasts in the body as long and has the same shelf life, said Robert Lipper, vice president of biopharmaceuticals research and development at Bristol-Myers.

"It's the first time ever that two compa-

nies with competing products have worked together," said Dr. Michael Saag, director of the AIDS Center at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. "This is something patient advocates and a lot of physicians have been pushing for over a decade."

Fauci also said such partnerships are crucial. "We hope it's the beginning of future collaborations," he said.

The three drugs in the combination, which are becoming the treatment of choice, together cost \$900 to \$1,000 a month. Rosen said it is too soon to say how much the companies will charge for the single pill.

The combination does not include a protease inhibitor, a class of drug that has been standard in recent years but that also carries many side effects.

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COURTESY OF THE HERRICK FAMILY/AP

Ron Herrick pushes his twin brother, Richard, in a wheelchair Jan. 30, 1955, following the first successful organ transplant at Peter Bent Brigham Hospital in Boston. Ron donated a kidney to Richard, who suffered from chronic nephritis, an inflammation of the kidneys.

Twin's kidney donation 50 years ago paved way for organ transplants

BY GLENN ADAMS
The Associated Press

BELGRADE, Maine — Fifty years ago, Ronald Herrick wasn't thinking about making medical history that would one day lead to saving countless lives. He just wanted to save one life — his brother's.

He said it took him no time at all to agree to donate a kidney to his dying twin, Richard. But that 5½-hour operation on Dec. 23, 1954, would not only keep Richard alive for eight more years, it would lead to thousands of kidney transplants and ultimately the transplant of other organs, from the heart to the liver. Herrick's doctor would win a Nobel Prize.

"It was a start, but they've done an awful lot of transplants since then," said Herrick, a soft-spoken man who accepts his place in the annals of medical breakthroughs but plays down his place in history.

More than 400,000 transplants have been performed in the United States since the first successful one 50 years ago at what's now known as Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. More than 25,000 occur each year in the United States.

Back in 1954, though, the surgery had not been done successfully and doctors were struggling to find a way to stop rejection of the transplanted organ that had claimed the lives of every other transplant recipient.

As the story goes, Ron Herrick told a doctor at the U.S. Public Health Service Hospital he would gladly give up a kidney if it would help his brother, who was dying

from chronic nephritis, an inflammation of the kidneys.

The doctor told him it wasn't possible, but then he had an idea: Since the Herricks were identical twins, the likelihood of the organ being rejected would be reduced. Maybe it was possible after all.

Richard Herrick was transferred to what was then Peter Bent Brigham Hospital, where extensive work on transplants was under way.

Dr. Joseph Murray, the lead surgeon who won the Nobel Prize in 1990, said he had prepared for two years for the operation, discovering that a transplanted kidney, in the absence of immune problems, can function.

"And then on our doorstep, we happened to have had identical twins," he told the New York Organ Donor Network, which coordinates organ and tissue donations in New York area. "One was dying of kidney disease, the other was healthy. It was the perfect human setup for our laboratory model."

Ron Herrick, now 73, said there was no deep anxiety on his part.

"We felt very strongly that it would work. Of course, it hadn't been done before. But they knew their research," he said.

Richard Herrick enjoyed good health before developing problems in his new kidney that were unrelated to the surgery. With his health failing, he died on March 14, 1963, at home in Shrewsbury, Mass.

With the advent of anti-rejection drugs, organ transplants have become much more common.

NIH stops Aleve drug study

Risks included heart attacks, strokes

BY PAUL REECER
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — An Alzheimer's disease prevention trial was suspended after researchers said there were more heart attacks and strokes among patients taking naproxen, an over-the-counter pain reliever in use for 28 years and commonly sold under the brand name Aleve.

The study, involving some 2,500 patients, was to test whether naproxen or Celebrex, both pain relievers, could reduce the risk of Alzheimer's disease among healthy elderly patients who were at an increased risk of the disease.

Officials at the National Institutes of Health said the study was suspended after three years when it was found that patients taking naproxen had a 50 percent greater incidence of cardiovascular events — heart attack or stroke — than patients taking placebo.

Another factor, officials said, was the announcement last week that advertising for Celebrex was being halted after a study found that high doses of the drug were associated with an increase in

heart attack risk. Preliminary data from the Alzheimer's study, however, did not indicate an increased risk for heart attack or stroke for Celebrex, officials said.

Lester Crawford, acting commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, acknowledged Tuesday that the conflicting studies are confusing and call for continued evaluation. For now, he recommended following the dosage recommendations for the drugs.

"Any drug taken long enough and at high enough dosage can cause some difficulty," Crawford said on NBC's "Today."

"It would be premature to say what we're going to do with either one of these drugs, Celebrex or Aleve," he said. "However, we will keep all regulator options open and make some determinations as quickly as possible based on the data."

Celebrex, a prescription drug, and naproxen are both commonly used to treat the joint pain of arthritis. Naproxen has been approved for sale, first as a prescription and then as an over-the-counter drug, since 1976. Celebrex is in the same class —

COX2 enzyme inhibitors — as Vioxx, an arthritis drug recently taken off the market by its manufacturer after it was linked to an increase in heart attack and stroke.

Officials acknowledged that the implications for the continued use of naproxen are not clear and will require further study.

Dr. Sandra Kweider of the FDA said the NIH study is the first to show that naproxen might increase the risk of heart attack or stroke and that the findings are "confusing." No immediate action, however, is expected toward naproxen, she said.

"We are not contemplating any specific regulatory action over the next few days," Kweider said. "We will be working with the NIH to try to understand the data better and determine what will be appropriate from there."

Patients who routinely take naproxen should follow the drug package instructions carefully, Kweider said, including the directions to not take it for more than 10 days, and to consult a doctor if pain persists.

Efforts to obtain reaction Monday night produced no answers at phone numbers for Bayer Health-care, the maker of Aleve.

FACES

Cruz, Hayek bond

Spanish movie star **Penelope Cruz** and Mexican actress **Salma Hayek** hit it off from day one during the filming of "Banditas."



Cruz, left, and Hayek

"We've enjoyed it from the first day until yesterday," said Cruz, having completed about 14 weeks of working with Hayek, mostly in the northern Mexican state of Durango. "We have an incredible communication."

Written and produced by French filmmaker **Luc Besson**, "Banditas" tells the story of two women who overcome their differences to work together robbing banks.

Hayek, who was born in Coahuilacalcos in the Gulf coast state of Veracruz, said her role as a Robin Hood-style bandit came easy after a piece of advice from Besson.

"The first thing he told us was it's very important that these women be heroes but want to stop being women," Hayek said.

Stars pitch in for hurricane fund-raiser

A poster signed by **Jennifer Lopez** and a guitar signed by **Wyclef Jean** are on sale in an MTV Internet auction to raise money for hurricane victims.



Jean

Seventy-five percent of proceeds from the Caribbean Relief Auction will go to American Red Cross efforts in Haiti, Grenada and the Cayman Islands, according to MTV's Web site. Other items include a poster signed by **Britney Spears**, tickets to "The Daily Show with **Jon Stewart**" and a travel package to Grenada.

"I think fans pay attention," Jean said. "They are aware of the situation and want to do what they can to contribute."

The hip-hop star this week released a new music video, under the auspices of the U.N. World Food Program, to help Haitian victims of floods and rising political violence. He also has set up the charity Yele Haiti to help his impoverished

homeland.

Scott shares her trauma

R&B singer **Jill Scott** says she was raped more than 10 years ago by her then-boyfriend.

After dating the unidentified man sporadically since she was 15, Scott says in the January issue of *Sister 2 Sister* magazine that when she was about 19, she visited him at his apartment.

"I came over there just to be around him 'cause I liked him so much. I just wanted to be around him, it didn't matter," Scott, 32, told the magazine. "He attacked me. I mean, I'm down for getting back wild just like anybody else, but this wasn't that. It was ripping my clothes off, me saying, 'Wait! No! Don't! Stop! What are you doing?'"

Scott says that she didn't realize what had occurred until she was recently writing in her journal.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press

A celebrity Christmas list

One columnist has ideas on what to get for those naughty Hollywood stars (and a few nice ones)

BY LUIAINE LEE

Scripts Howard News Service

It's that time of year again, time to think of Christmas wishes you'd give the stars you've met during the year if you could. Julia Roberts already received her Christmas package with the birth of twins. Being a mother will probably provide the gift of stress: a little humility. A blubbery waistline, a touch of colic, feedings, loads of dirty diapers — all that should conspire to make Julia a little less contrary.

For Angelina Jolie, a fine present would be a decent husband-father to go with the new-found mother in her.

How about a wedding ring for Goldie Hawn, a teething ring for Nicolas Cage's new wife, and for Tom Hanks, a role that takes him beyond his endless goodwill into a tougher dimension? A healthy physique wouldn't be amiss for Renee Zellweger, instead of the emaciated one she pursues when she finishes with plump little "Bridget Jones."

How about a bottle of mouthwash for

Colin Farrell and a one-way ticket back to Australia for Russell Crowe? The gift of silence would be the best thing for Tommy Lee Jones, who can't open his mouth without baring someone. And for Jack Nicholson, a portrayal that does not depend on the Good Ol' Boy persona to get him through.

A trip to India with meditation on the mount might be just the ticket for Helen Hunt, and for Alec Baldwin, a seat in local government.

For David Duchovny, a role that matches his stout intellect, and for director Wes Craven, a movie that hasn't a single scream in it.

A welcome gift might be an extra nanny for Jada Pinkett Smith, a better talk show for John McEnroe, funnier guests for Ellen DeGeneres and early retirement for David Letterman.

And for the nation's desperate housewives, how about a hunky 2005 calendar featuring **Josh Duhamel**, **Michael Weatherly**, **Antonio Banderas**, **Aaron Eckhardt**, **Jude Law**, **Taye Diggs**, **Ned McDonough**, **Hugh Jackman**, **George Clooney**, **Denzel Washington**, **Matthew Fox** and **Matt Damon** — not only gorgeous but good guys in the bargain.

May CBS get a clue, Dan Rather get a civilian job and FX find another "Nip/Tuck."

The best gift for **Dakota Fanning** would be a childhood, and for **Britney Spears**, adulthood.

It would be a charitable gift if reality shows would get real and fictional drama would come out of hiding.

Renee Zellweger may want to seek out a happy medium for her body, somewhere between **Bridget Jones** and skinny as a rail.



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Instant messaging at workplace not always protective

By Julie Forster

Night Reader Newspapers

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Instant messaging — real-time text conversation that takes place in private online chat areas — is beginning to mount a challenge to conventional e-mail in the workplace.

Some 11 million people are estimated to be using "IM" at work.

But long before this wave of Internet-based communication turns, "Did you get my e-mail?" the white out," many employees are wary.

"Most workplaces don't know how to deal with instant messaging," said Amanda Lenhart, co-author of a report on the technology from the Pew Internet & American Life Project.

They wonder, is this a productivity tool or a waste of time? Some companies embrace the technology. Others have banned it.

Many take a "don't ask, don't tell" attitude about employees downloading instant messaging software off the Internet and putting it on their desktops.

Research into users of IM suggests reason for concern. The Pew Internet project found one of three users it studied believes IM prompts gossip.

The American Management Association found in a study of 850 companies this year most of the

workplace in IM users said they engage in personal chats. Among the chat-room fodder: jokes, insider information about the company or a client and even sexual content.

Use of IM is growing and rivals e-mail for some age groups.

Fifty-three percent of adult Internet users traded instant messages in 2004, up 29 percent from 2000, when the Pew Internet & American Life Project first started tracking its use.

This year, its estimated work place use at 11 million. Among users who are 18 to 27 years old, 46 percent use it more than e-mail, the group found.

"This is one of those things where you really have to go back to the introduction of PCs them

selves," said Lou Latham, principal analyst at Gartner, a technology research group in Stamford, Conn.

In the late '70s and early '80s, people were sneaking them into the office. It was considered a strange and alien... technology by the powers that be."

Companies like Stellar Technologies in Naples, Fla., are trying to help employers understand the latest alien. It sells software to businesses that acts as a security guard, recording IM activity and allowing bosses to monitor employee real-time chats.

Toby Dutter was surprised at what he found out when he logged on to monitor what his employees were doing.

The vice president of Indianhead Insurance Agency in Eau Claire, Wis., gave monitoring software a try on the advice of his IT consultant. Dutter did not want to ban instant messaging because it was a convenient, quick way for employees dispersed among six offices to communicate without playing phone tag. But he still wondered what all that tapping was about.

"I think employees would be amazed to find out what's going on," he said. Dutter said he found a lot of time-wasting chat, weekend plans were a popular topic among the 50 employees in the firm when he first monitored various chats. Volume tapered off when he told his staff they were being watched.

Some still did not take him seriously. So he printed out their IM chats and showed them the hard

Instant messaging

U.S. adults who use instant messaging and those who use it at work, according to a recent study

Estimated adult users	At work users, percent who say it
In millions	Saves time: 50%
53	Provides relief from grind: 47%
41	Encourages gossip: 32%
	Is a distraction: 29%

11 million Users at work

© 2004 RSC
Source: Pew Internet and American Life Project
Graphic: St. Paul Pioneer Press

copy. Gap. Case closed.

Disciplined Growth Investors, a money management firm in Minneapolis, uses the Stellar application, too, but more as a means to archive communication in the highly regulated securities industry.

Conversations between portfolio managers and clients need to be saved for regulators, said Shawn Buckwold, the company's network administrator. Instant messenger is one of the hot buttons for the SEC to audit," she said.

While many are wary, a growing number of employees are embracing what they see as big benefits.

Fallon Worldwide, a Minneapolis advertising agency, is rolling out Lotus instant messaging software to about 400 employees in seven offices worldwide.

Soon all will have one sanctioned, company-supported messaging system and the ability to integrate that system with the firm's e-mail address books. If they want, workers can route their instant messages to their cell phones. Said Rick McGehean, Fallon's director of IT.

It is a way to give globetrotting employees access to information cheaper than a phone call and more quickly than e-mail. And everyone is on the same page instead of having the headaches and security issues of people on all different versions.

Some Fallon employees have been testing it. "We use it for instantaneous communication," McGehean said. "It's quick. I'm not sending someone an e-mail waiting for someone to respond. I send a message. Ding they get it. Ding they respond. It's instant gratification."

Others, though, simply see a gradual annoyance. Steve McFarland, president of technology outsourcing firm Orbit Systems in Eagan, Minn., acknowledges IM is popular among the 32 tech workers in his office. He's not one to ban it.

"I'll get on the instant messaging system and use it for a period of time until it drives me crazy," McFarland said. "Then, I won't get back on for months."

MONDAY'S MARKET SUMMARY

INDEXES									
52-week High	Low	Name	Last	Net Chg	% Chg	YTD % Chg	52-week High	Low	Name
10,733.51	9,762.40	Dow Jones Industrial	10,621.00	+11.59	+0.11	+11.59	10,733.51	9,762.40	Dow Jones Industrial
3,778.55	2,743.46	Dow Jones Transportation	3,738.88	-20.19	-0.54	+24.67	3,778.55	2,743.46	Dow Jones Transportation
335.20	254.11	Dow Jones Utilities	323.21	+4.12	+1.25	+24.84	335.20	254.11	Dow Jones Utilities
7,161.96	6,171.85	NASDAQ Composite	7,115.98	+18.83	+0.27	+18.51	7,161.96	6,171.85	NASDAQ Composite
1,111.28	956.25	AMEX	1,144.57	+5.36	+0.48	+20.62	1,111.28	956.25	AMEX
2,471.77	1,758.82	NYSE Composite	2,417.85	-3.35	-0.14	+21.85	2,471.77	1,758.82	NYSE Composite
12,077.51	10,662.72	S&P 500	11,948.45	+4.5	+0.04	+14.47	12,077.51	10,662.72	S&P 500
656.25	549.29	S&P MidCap	648.72	-2.54	-0.40	+12.25	656.25	549.29	S&P MidCap
4,681.51	3,519.59	Russell 2000	4,638.85	-4.03	-0.09	+14.57	4,681.51	3,519.59	Russell 2000
11,096.39	10,426.52	DJ Wilshire 5000	11,723.61	+10.62	+0.09	+11.01	11,096.39	10,426.52	DJ Wilshire 5000

KEY DEFENSE STOCKS						KEY MUTUAL FUNDS					
Name	Div	PE	Last	Chg.	YTD	Name	NAV	NAV	Chg.	YTD	
Apple Technology		35	46.28	±	+15.9	Fidelity Investor: Grd	58.91	58.91	±	+10.0	
Armer Industries	1.00	20	31.50	±	+15.9	Fidelity Investor: Grd	58.91	58.91	±	+10.0	
Computer Sciences		25	56.75	±	+15.9	Fidelity Investor: Grd	58.91	58.91	±	+10.0	
General Dynamics	1.00	20	31.50	±	+15.9	Fidelity Investor: Grd	58.91	58.91	±	+10.0	
General Electric	1.00	20	31.50	±	+15.9	Fidelity Investor: Grd	58.91	58.91	±	+10.0	
General Motors	1.00	20	31.50	±	+15.9	Fidelity Investor: Grd	58.91	58.91	±	+10.0	
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General Motors	1.00	20									

THURSDAY EVENING / DECEMBER 23, 2004

MOVIES

SPORTS

J	6PM	6:30	7PM	7:30	8PM	8:30	9PM	9:30	10PM	10:30	11PM	11:30
6	AFN-P	•ESPNews	Pacific Report	Two and a Half Men: Jim's school assignment. (CC)	To Be Announced	Will & Grace: Top Cream Ball: Will's client fails for Jack. (CC)	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation 'X': A female inmate is found dead and tied to a prison bus. (CC)		Pacific Report	The Tonight Show (CC)		Late Show (CC)
7	AFN-AT	(5:46) Oprah Winfrey (CC)	(3:55) Guiding Light (CC)	(1:17) General Hospital (CC)	Headline News	Judge Judy (CC)	Today (CC)			Legend of Tarzan (Part 2 of 2) (CC)	Aashi! Real Monsters!	
8	NEWS	Hardball with Chris Matthews	The O'Reilly Factor (CC)		FOX News		Fox and Friends		Fox and Friends	American Morning		
9	SPORTS	•(5:00) NBA Basketball Teams To Be Announced.		•World Sport	•SportsCenter	•College Football GMAC Bowl - Bowling Green vs. Memphis. From Mobile, Ala. (Taped)						
10	SPEC	The Simpsons: C.E.O. (CC)	Everybody Loves Raymond (CC)	Summerland: 'Secrets' As a nostalgic look at Brad's relationship with Sarah. (CC)	The Practice: 'Final Judgment' Ellen gets a job for a death row inmate. (CC)			Friends (CC)	Seinfeld: Jerry bays his father an organizer. (CC)	The Daily Show (CC)	Blind Date (CC)	
11	AFN-AL	SpongeBob: Rugsrats (CC)	Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer (CC)	7th Heaven: 'Stand Up' (CC)	Sabrina-Witch (CC)	Sabrina-Witch (CC)	The Coolest Show: Home Improve.			Touched by an Angel: 'Dodegods' (CC)	••••• 'Raiders of the Lost Ark' (CC)	
12	AFM	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)
13	AFM	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)
14	TM	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)	••••• 'The House' man. Three women in different areas suffer serious crises. PG-13 (R)
15	PBS	Dragon Tales: 'Don't want to share.' (CC) (DVS)	The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer (N) (CC)	The News This Old House: How granite steps, windows, floor decks, timber treatment. (N) (CC)	Antiques Roadshow: Some of the rarest objects found, including a Navajo Chief's blanket. (CC)			Still Holding On: The Music of Dorothy Lou Coates and the Original Gospel Harmonettes (CC)		Charlie Rose: Jimmy Carter (CC)		
16	SHOW	(15) "Lost Treasure" (2003, Action Stephen Baldwin, Nicole Sheridan, A pilot helps a man find treasure and rescue his brother. (Subitled-English) (R) (CC)	(4:45) SHO First Me (CC)					••••• 'The Boys of Street Park' (2003, Documentary) Friends from childhood look back on their lives. (R) (CC)		(4:45) "Hal: Hallelujah! Resurrection" (2002) (R)		
17	A&E	City Confidential: "Pitbull": A man's second wife dies the same way he first wife did. (CC)	American Justice: A murder in Greenfield. The Martha Moxley Case: Teen is bludgeoned to death. (CC)	Cold Case: "Vince": The Punishment. Love Triangle: Second Story: Partner A wild hunt for a man in the capture of a serial rapist. (CC)	Superstructures	To Be Announced		MovieReel: "Ocean's Twelve" (Series Premier) Steven Soderbergh directs "Ocean's Twelve". (N) (CC)		Crossing Jordan: Lily's principles are tested by a confidential informant in a murder case. (CC)	To Be Announced	
18	DISC	To Be Announced	To Be Announced	Superstructures	To Be Announced			To Be Announced		To Be Announced		
19	TFC	Wazz Up Wazz Up	Star Circle Scout	Malaika Mo Keys (In tagalog)	(5:15) Insider	Kumusta Kabanay						
20	CNN+	•Larry King Live (CC)	CNN World News	•World Sport	Business International	Asia Tonight	•What's Asia?	CNN World News	World Report	•Euro Asia	Business International	
21	GOLF	PGA Championship Highlights: Shaun Michael.	•Memorial Tournament Highlights	•Sony Open Highlights	Overhaul: Lance Armstrong's GTD. Summer and Marissa attend the Sh.O.C. Winter. (N) (CC)	•Golf Channel Academy	•Bolt's the Relationship?	•Golf Channel Academy	•Golf With Style	•European PGA Golf Classics - First Round. (N) (CC)		
22	TLC	Clean Sweep: A couple's home is infested with papers, boxes, stuffed animals and clothes. (CC)	Samurai Jack	Dexter's Laboratory	Codename: Justice	Justice League	Powerful Girls!	Cartoon Cartoon	Looney Tunes	I Am Weasel	What a Cartoon Show	Scooby-Do, Where Are You!
23	TOON	The Crocodile Hunter: A Handful of Elephants: Observing the endangered Indonesian elephant. (CC)	Strangers With Candy: Women in high school. (CC)	The Daily Show: Rick Moranis. (CC)	Snake Wranglers: Black tiger snake. (CC)	Chrono Chronicles: Search for pythons. (CC)	Build for the Kill: Island: Nicole tries hunting techniques. (CC)	Secret China: A couple finds that the land on their island is chipped away by civilization. (CC)	Mixx: "Film Fest": "MXC The Monster Special" (CC)	Hey Spring of Trivia (N) (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)
24	ANPL	Strangers With Candy: Women in high school. (CC)	The Daily Show: Rick Moranis. (CC)	Snake Wranglers: Black tiger snake. (CC)	Chrono Chronicles: Search for pythons. (CC)	Build for the Kill: Island: Nicole tries hunting techniques. (CC)	Secret China: A couple finds that the land on their island is chipped away by civilization. (CC)	Mixx: "Film Fest": "MXC The Monster Special" (CC)	Hey Spring of Trivia (N) (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)
25	COM	Riddles of the Dead: "In Search of a Lost Princess: The last surviving member of a royal family. (CC)	Snake Wranglers: Black tiger snake. (CC)	Chrono Chronicles: Search for pythons. (CC)	Build for the Kill: Island: Nicole tries hunting techniques. (CC)	Secret China: A couple finds that the land on their island is chipped away by civilization. (CC)	Mixx: "Film Fest": "MXC The Monster Special" (CC)	Hey Spring of Trivia (N) (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)
26	NOCA	The World's Wildest Police Videos (CC)	CSI: Crime Scene Investigation: "Abra Cadaver" (CC) (DVS)	The O.C.: "The O.C." (CC) (DVS)	The O.C.: "The O.C." (CC) (DVS)	The O.C.: "The O.C." (CC) (DVS)	The O.C.: "The O.C." (CC) (DVS)	The O.C.: "The O.C." (CC) (DVS)	The O.C.: "The O.C." (CC) (DVS)	The O.C.: "The O.C." (CC) (DVS)	The O.C.: "The O.C." (CC) (DVS)	The O.C.: "The O.C." (CC) (DVS)
27	SPKE	Remington Steele: Steele 'You Heart Away' An amnesiac Steele ends up in an Irish hospital. (CC)	Snake Wranglers: Black tiger snake. (CC)	Chrono Chronicles: Search for pythons. (CC)	Build for the Kill: Island: Nicole tries hunting techniques. (CC)	Secret China: A couple finds that the land on their island is chipped away by civilization. (CC)	Mixx: "Film Fest": "MXC The Monster Special" (CC)	Hey Spring of Trivia (N) (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)
28	Fox	Remington Steele: Steele 'You Heart Away' An amnesiac Steele ends up in an Irish hospital. (CC)	Snake Wranglers: Black tiger snake. (CC)	Chrono Chronicles: Search for pythons. (CC)	Build for the Kill: Island: Nicole tries hunting techniques. (CC)	Secret China: A couple finds that the land on their island is chipped away by civilization. (CC)	Mixx: "Film Fest": "MXC The Monster Special" (CC)	Hey Spring of Trivia (N) (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)
29	BET	106 & Park: BET's Top 10 Live Interview.	Snake Wranglers: Black tiger snake. (CC)	Chrono Chronicles: Search for pythons. (CC)	Build for the Kill: Island: Nicole tries hunting techniques. (CC)	Secret China: A couple finds that the land on their island is chipped away by civilization. (CC)	Mixx: "Film Fest": "MXC The Monster Special" (CC)	Hey Spring of Trivia (N) (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)
30	COURT	NYPD Blue: "Sleep Over" The robbery and a drug habit. (CC)	Cops: Officers nab a suspected drug dealer. (CC)	Cops: Officers nab a suspected drug dealer. (CC)	Cops: Officers nab a suspected drug dealer. (CC)	Cops: Officers nab a suspected drug dealer. (CC)	Cops: Officers nab a suspected drug dealer. (CC)	Cops: Officers nab a suspected drug dealer. (CC)	Cops: Officers nab a suspected drug dealer. (CC)	Cops: Officers nab a suspected drug dealer. (CC)	Cops: Officers nab a suspected drug dealer. (CC)	Cops: Officers nab a suspected drug dealer. (CC)
31	STR-WL	The Simpsons (CC)	The Drew Carey Show	Snake Wranglers: Black tiger snake. (CC)	Chrono Chronicles: Search for pythons. (CC)	Build for the Kill: Island: Nicole tries hunting techniques. (CC)	Secret China: A couple finds that the land on their island is chipped away by civilization. (CC)	Mixx: "Film Fest": "MXC The Monster Special" (CC)	Hey Spring of Trivia (N) (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)
32	LIFE	The Golden Girls: Rose deals with a crush. (CC)	The Golden Girls: Rose deals with a crush. (CC)	Snake Wranglers: Black tiger snake. (CC)	Chrono Chronicles: Search for pythons. (CC)	Build for the Kill: Island: Nicole tries hunting techniques. (CC)	Secret China: A couple finds that the land on their island is chipped away by civilization. (CC)	Mixx: "Film Fest": "MXC The Monster Special" (CC)	Hey Spring of Trivia (N) (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)
33	ABCFM	7th Heaven: "Stand Up" (CC)	Snake Wranglers: Black tiger snake. (CC)	Chrono Chronicles: Search for pythons. (CC)	Build for the Kill: Island: Nicole tries hunting techniques. (CC)	Secret China: A couple finds that the land on their island is chipped away by civilization. (CC)	Mixx: "Film Fest": "MXC The Monster Special" (CC)	Hey Spring of Trivia (N) (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)
34	HIST	Modern Marvels: "Robot: The history of robotics. (CC)	Snake Wranglers: Black tiger snake. (CC)	Chrono Chronicles: Search for pythons. (CC)	Build for the Kill: Island: Nicole tries hunting techniques. (CC)	Secret China: A couple finds that the land on their island is chipped away by civilization. (CC)	Mixx: "Film Fest": "MXC The Monster Special" (CC)	Hey Spring of Trivia (N) (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)
35	STR-WL	7th Heaven: "Stand Up" (CC)	Snake Wranglers: Black tiger snake. (CC)	Chrono Chronicles: Search for pythons. (CC)	Build for the Kill: Island: Nicole tries hunting techniques. (CC)	Secret China: A couple finds that the land on their island is chipped away by civilization. (CC)	Mixx: "Film Fest": "MXC The Monster Special" (CC)	Hey Spring of Trivia (N) (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)
36	ADV 1	In the Air: Beyond the Horizon: "The Horizon Club: A flight instructor's life. (CC)	Snake Wranglers: Black tiger snake. (CC)	Chrono Chronicles: Search for pythons. (CC)	Build for the Kill: Island: Nicole tries hunting techniques. (CC)	Secret China: A couple finds that the land on their island is chipped away by civilization. (CC)	Mixx: "Film Fest": "MXC The Monster Special" (CC)	Hey Spring of Trivia (N) (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)
37	MTV	Real World: "Road Rules Challenge: A flight instructor's life. (CC)	Snake Wranglers: Black tiger snake. (CC)	Chrono Chronicles: Search for pythons. (CC)	Build for the Kill: Island: Nicole tries hunting techniques. (CC)	Secret China: A couple finds that the land on their island is chipped away by civilization. (CC)	Mixx: "Film Fest": "MXC The Monster Special" (CC)	Hey Spring of Trivia (N) (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)
38	NICK	Justice: "Rugsrats/SpongeBob SquarePants" (CC)	Snake Wranglers: Black tiger snake. (CC)	Chrono Chronicles: Search for pythons. (CC)	Build for the Kill: Island: Nicole tries hunting techniques. (CC)	Secret China: A couple finds that the land on their island is chipped away by civilization. (CC)	Mixx: "Film Fest": "MXC The Monster Special" (CC)	Hey Spring of Trivia (N) (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)	MXC: "The Writer Sports Special" (CC)

JAPAN TV

Morning
6:45 Morning (12)
7:00 Dragon (12)
8:00 Japan Boys' Soccer Championship (12)
9:00 Japan and the Tokyo Olympics (12)
9:30 Christmas Open Tennis 2004 (12)
10:00 Japan Music Countdown (12)
11:00 WAC Rally Championship (12)
12:00 Japan Wrestling Championships (3)
Evening
7:00 NHK News (1)
8:00 U.S. Movie (2000): The President's Man (12-51)
10:00 News (1)
12:30 X-File: JAM 2004 - Snowboarding World Championship at Takahara (12)
1:15 Football CC: Serie A/Premier/Liga Division II
2:15 NHK Club (4)
2:30 U.S. Movie (2000): Frequency (2000)
3:00 British Movie (1999): Robbie the Reindeer

deer: Hooves of Fire/Robbie the Reindeer: Legend of the Lost (11:00-12)
3:50 Classical Music (11:00)

JAPAN TV-B57

Morning
6:10 World News Hour
7:00 World News Hour
8:10 World News Hour
9:00 Football Mundial
10:00 Japanese Major Leagues (4)
11:00 Japanese Major Leagues (4)
12:00 Japanese Major Leagues (4)
Evening
7:00 NHK News (1)
8:00 NHK News (1)
9:00 NHK News (1)
10:00 NHK News (1)
11:00 NHK News (1)
12:00 NHK News (1)
1:00 NHK News (1)
2:00 NHK News (1)
3:00 NHK News (1)
4:00 NHK News (1)
5:00 NHK News (1)
6:00 NHK News (1)

7:10 Figure Skating GP Series: GP Final (2): Men's Singles
8:10 Figure Skating GP Series: GP Final (3): Pairs
10:10 2004 Japanese Major Leagues (6): Shinjo Takahara
10:30 2004 Japanese Major Leagues (7): Akai-Otsuka
11:10 NFL: Seattle Seahawks vs. New York Jets
12:10 Asian News
1:10 World Amazing Sports
2:10 World Amazing Sports
3:10 World Amazing Sports
4:10 World Amazing Sports
5:10 World Amazing Sports
6:10 World Amazing Sports

Evening
7:10 Figure Skating GP Series: GP Final (2): Men's Singles
8:10 Figure Skating GP Series: GP Final (3): Pairs
10:10 2004 Japanese Major Leagues (6): Shinjo Takahara
10:30 2004 Japanese Major Leagues (7): Akai-Otsuka
11:10 NFL: Seattle Seahawks vs. New York Jets
12:10 Asian News
1:10 World Amazing Sports
2:10 World Amazing Sports
3:10 World Amazing Sports
4:10 World Amazing Sports
5:10 World Amazing Sports
6:10 World Amazing Sports

JAPAN TV-B511

3:00 Classical Music: NHK Symphony Orchestra: Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 in D Minor "Choral"
4:30 Grand Gourmet: Netherlands
Evening

7:00 NHK News
7:30 French Movie (1999): La Bushé (1:45)

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Morning
7:00 NHK News
7:30 French Movie (1999): La Bushé (1:45)
8:00 NHK News
8:30 NHK News
9:00 NHK News
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Church thefts

PA PITTSBURGH — The housekeeper at a Catholic parish's rectory near Pittsburgh stole more than \$173,000 from collections by rifling through the envelopes early each Monday and then making computer entries to cover up the thefts, authorities said.

Amy J. Caldwell, 57, was charged with stealing from Margaret of Scotland Church in Green Tree for nearly a decade, was charged with theft.

Church officials began a general investigation of their finances after state police in West Virginia found two bank deposit bags by a road in January. That prompted an audit, and the church changed the way it counted and stored its collection money — putting it into sealed, tamperproof bags.

Once that happened, the church's weekly collections increased dramatically, leading church officials to conclude that someone had been stealing money.

Off-color holiday humor

KY LOUISA — A weekly newspaper in eastern Kentucky has apologized for mistakenly printing sexually explicit Christmas jokes that left some blushing readers as red as Santa's suit.

The Lawrence County Storm also retrieved unsold copies of the edition with the jokes from newsstands in and around Louisa, where it is published.

Louisa Mayor Teddy Preston said he received phone calls from constituents who were angered and embarrassed by the jokes.

"It was very, very vulgar," Preston said. "It is something that shouldn't have been written in a local newspaper, or anywhere else, for that matter."

Some of the jokes were simply corny, but others put Santa in sexual situations, or made light of the religious nature of Christmas.

Elva McCoy, a member of the newspaper staff, said someone on the staff had been reading the jokes on the Internet and that they had inadvertently made their way into the newspaper.

Coal-fired power plant

CO DENVER — State regulators have approved Colorado's first coal-fired power plant in 23 years. The \$1.35 billion facility is designed to generate 750 megawatts of electricity a day — enough for 750,000 customers.

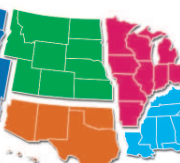
Under the agreement for the new unit at the Corralcote Generating Station in Pueblo, Xcel Energy must upgrade pollution-control equipment at the two existing units.

The Public Utilities Commission approved the agreement 2-1. If an air quality permit is approved next year by state health officials, construction on the plant could begin in 2006.

"It's a win-win-win," said Xcel vice president Fred Stoffel, referring to environmentalists, the company and ratepayers.

Teacher arrested

CA SAN JOSE — An elementary-school teacher has been arrested for alleged possession of



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

child pornography after a student in his classroom saw explicit pictures on the teacher's computer, according to police.

Christopher Casey, 44, turned himself in to police after detectives seized computers from his home, his classroom and a relative's home, authorities said.

Casey is a third-grade teacher at Castlemont Elementary School and has worked for the school district for 15 years, according to police.

Tree ban reversed

FL NEW PORT RICHEY — The Christmas tree decorations were being rehung at Pasco County buildings after the reversal of a county attorney's finding that the trees were unacceptable religious symbols.

Trees had been removed from county buildings after the initial decision, which allowed them only in "semiprivate" areas such as personal offices.

That decision drew angry reactions from residents and the American Center for Law & Justice, a law firm founded by televangelist Pat Robertson.

In a revised decision, the attorney said that a Christmas tree is a

purely secular symbol, along with Santa Claus and candy canes.

Rare bird found

TX BROWNSVILLE — A bird rarely found in the United States was discovered at a wildlife refuge in the Rio Grande Valley, officials said.

The bird, a female Cinnamon Collared Grosbeak, was found Dec. 10 at Camp Lula Sams after it apparently crashed into a window, said Pat Burchfield, the deputy director and zoologist at the Gladys Porter Zoo. The bird did not survive striking the window.

The bird, a native of Northern Mexico, is rarely found in the United States. This is the first specimen, said Mark Lockwood, with the Texas Bird Records Committee.

Educators OK strike

MO ST. LOUIS — St. Louis teachers have authorized a strike against the state's largest school district. The vote was 1,427-225, easily more than the two-thirds majority necessary. No walkout date has been set. The district's 3,450 teachers have worked without a contract since July. Missouri law doesn't allow public school teachers to strike, but doesn't specify penalties.

Large land purchase

NV INCLINE VILLAGE — The largest private land holding on the Nevada side of Lake Tahoe would be acquired for \$75 million under a public buyout being considered by federal land managers. The Bureau of Land Management is considering purchase of the 777-acre parcel that features scenic Incline Lake. If acquired, the land would be transferred to the U.S. Forest Service for public recreational use.

Tattoo for nonagenarian

PA DuBois — Ralph Bonebreak was born to be wild — in 1910.

The 94-year-old man recently got his first tattoo at the Tainted Flesh Tattoo and Piercing Studio in his hometown. Bonebreak emerged from under the needle with a locomotive on his right arm and an eagle on his left.

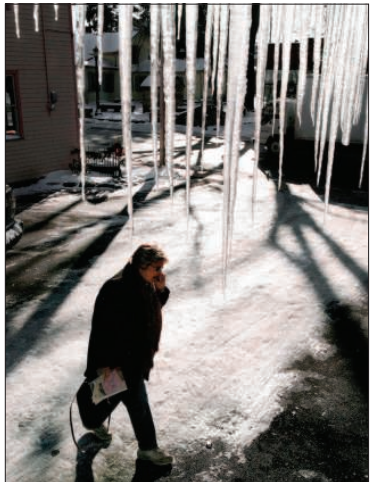
A lot of men who went into the military got tattoos, but Bonebreak's 38-year career with the railroad kept him out of the service, said his friend, Eve Camuso.

"He's always wanted a tattoo, but back then the only place you could get one was at the county fair," Camuso said.

"They weren't very clean." Bonebreak selected a train to commemorate his time with the railroad. A belt buckle inspired his eagle design.

Skyway toll raise

IN HAMMOND — The new operator of the Chicago Skyway will raise toll rates to discourage tractor-trailer drivers from traveling during peak times. Effective Feb. 16, tolls for vehicles with three or more axles will increase during the peak hours of 4 a.m. to 8 p.m. Drivers of passenger cars will pay the same rates all day.



Point of entry

Junction of Olmsted Falls, Ohio.

A woman walks by icicles on her way to Violet's Florist and Gifts in the Grand Pacific Junction of Olmsted Falls, Ohio.



Flake face

the snow in Banner Elk, N.C.

William Shaffer, 9, from Tampa, Fla., braves the heavy snow and low temperatures as he plays in the snow in Banner Elk, N.C.



Snow-leaping lion

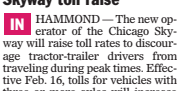
left of a snowman as a catapult to reach a nearby rock in San Diego.

Oshana, a lioness at the San Diego Zoo's Wild Animal Park, uses what is left of a snowman as a catapult to reach a nearby rock in San Diego.



Giving kids the world

Syracuse University football player Matt Tarullo rides on a carousel with 4-year-old Karissa Shibley in Kissimmee, Fla. Tarullo was spending time with children at Give Kids The World Village, a nonprofit resort in Kissimmee for children with life-threatening illnesses.





Jokesters, stage right Fifth-graders Nancy Chol, second right, and Chelsea Atkinson, far right, joke with each other before going on stage to perform their part in "The Nutcracker" at Cimmaron Elementary School in Aurora, Colo.



Three little rascals From left, Hunter Taylor, Eva Lenhard and Gillian Wittstock with the Steppin' Out dance company perform a Little Rascals number in the annual December dance performance in Petersburg, Alaska.



Claus with a cause Santa Claus is framed through the American flag as he waves and rings the bell at cars passing by in Fort Smith, Ark. Claus, hired by Lin's Thrift Store, was donating half his proceeds to help needy children.



Up in the rafters J.R. Richardson positions a scaffold as he prepares to cut a rafter from the roof while helping dismantle the old University of Illinois Sheep Barn in Champaign, Ill.

Reporter drops charges

NC GRAHAM — Prosecutors have dropped criminal charges filed against a developer accused of assaulting and threatening a newspaper reporter.

The reporter asked prosecutors to drop charges against Ernie Koury Jr. after he apologized. Koury had been charged with communicating threats and simple assault.

James Moffat, a reporter for The Times-News of Burlington, said that Koury grabbed him by the throat and threatened to kill him earlier this month at the Burlington Municipal Building. Koury allegedly was unhappy with the newspaper's coverage of a private club that Koury is involved with opening.

Crying over spilled milk

CA SAN FRANCISCO — A milk truck overturned in California's Marin County, spilling 4,500 gallons of milk into Nicasio Creek and closing the roadway for 90 minutes, the California Highway Patrol said.

The truck, which had picked up a load of milk from a dairy just before the accident, ruptured and milk flowed across the road, down a hillside and into the creek.

Workers from the California Department of Fish and Game responded to the accident to oversee cleanup of the milk, which can be harmful to fish, authorities said.

Trees at a premium

HI HONOLULU — A shortage of Christmas trees in Hawaii has raised prices to more than \$200.

Tree buyers camped outside a shopping center hours before dawn to await a shipment of 130 noble fir flown in from Oregon. A crowd of more than 200 people had gathered by morning, when a salesman announced the trees would cost \$165 to \$200. Consumers complained that was at least twice the price charged just a few days earlier. In previous weeks, trees sold for \$30. Most Christmas trees sold in Hawaii have been delivered by cargo ships from farms in the Pacific Northwest. Last season, sellers suffered losses when hundreds went unsold, forcing them to give away.

But this year, smaller orders caused a major shortage across the islands. Many major retailers sold out. But some customers rebelled. "He thinks he's got us because he's got the trees. But we have the money, and maybe we won't pay," shouted Barbara Taylor.

Bowling alley to close

MO ST. LOUIS — The historic Western Lanes — St. Louis' last full-sized bowling alley — will soon close its doors, said news in a city that's home to the International Bowling Museum Hall of Fame.

AMF Bowling Worldwide Inc. says that next month the 36-lane bowling alley will end a run that began in 1962.

That will leave only four small alleys — two of them at Catholic parishes — in a city that once boasted about 30 bowling halls.

The Western is offering customers \$1-a-game bowling until its Jan. 30 closing.

Richard Weber, AMF's district

manager, said Western financially "has really gone south," starting to lose serious money more than a year ago.

Spending most on firs

CT GREENWICH — Wealthy Fairfield County tops the United States in Christmas tree sales, according to a survey of farmers by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. While fresh trees sell for about \$30 in most parts of the state, the average price is \$50 to \$60 along the Gold Coast, growers say. One nursery sells North Carolina-grown Fraser fir up to 16 feet tall for \$500, including delivery and installation.

Deaths from overdosing

VA ROANOKE — Drug overdose deaths are apparently leveling off in western Virginia after years of sharp increases.

Dr. William Massello of the state medical examiner's office says 136 area residents died of overdoses through mid-August. Last year's total was 223. This year's total won't be known for some time, since it takes several months to confirm an overdose.

Driving fatalities decline

WI WAUSAU — Wisconsin is on pace to have significantly fewer traffic fatalities this year and fewer than the five-year average, safety experts say.

They cite increased seat belt use, stiffer law enforcement and a tougher drunken driving law. As of Friday, 744 people died in traffic fatalities, about 9 percent fewer than at the same time a year ago, officials reported.

Airport has tardy image

AZ PHOENIX — Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport ranked seventh-worst in the country among 31 major airports in on-time departures from January through October, according to U.S. Department of Transportation statistics.

The tardiest airline this year in Phoenix was Southwest Airlines. Southwest is revamping flight schedules to improve its on-time numbers, said Bill Owen, the airline's senior schedule planner.

Notices e-mailed free

DE DOVER — People interested in state government can now sign up for e-mail notices about everything from regulatory changes to General Assembly votes.

The free service includes most major state departments and agencies. For several years, parents in Delaware have been able to get weather-related school closing notices e-mailed to them.

Bay of Pigs museum

FL MIAMI — Ground was broken for a museum recalling the failed Bay of Pigs invasion of 1961. A restored B-26 bomber will be part of the display at Kendall-Tamiami Executive Airport.

Cuban-American exiles from Miami filed the ranks of the U.S.-led invasion. Ten exile pilots and four American airmen died in the attempt to dislodge Fidel Castro from power.

Stories and photos from wire services

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Remembering a WWII vet

I've appreciated reading the coverage of the 60th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge. My uncle, Pvt. Irving "Buddy" Clements, died in that battle 60 years ago.

According to records we have, the Germans had captured several soldiers. My uncle was on a half hairy and saw what had happened. He began to fire at the Germans who were guarding the men, giving some of them time to escape. He was killed by the enemy returning fire.

My Dad and all three of his brothers were in Europe fighting at that time. My grand-mother had said that she woke up one night out of a sound sleep to see a vision of a soldier. She knew then that one of her sons would be killed. She was notified shortly after of Uncle Buddy's death. He was buried at the cemetery in Luxembourg.

I have a lot of respect for the men who fought for our freedom in World War II. I want to thank them for their sacrifice. I know that my dad was forever changed by the time he spent in Germany.

I'm glad to be able to support my husband as he does his part in the war we fight today. I pray that we can stand firm and finish what the enemy has started, just like our fathers before us.

Martie Carter

Heidelberg, Germany

Stop whining over badge

To the writer of "No CIB in an Army of One" (letter, Dec. 10): First and foremost, I as a soldier need to stop whining about not being awarded a badge that is distinctive to a particular military occupational specialty. Let's look at the name of the badge: Combat Infantryman Badge. It is not the Combat Military Policeman Badge or the Combat Truck Driver Badge.

Every MOS [military occupational specialty] contributes toward taking the fight to the enemy. Particular ones are just more directly involved in engaging the enemy. We've all seen faces during every time they roll out the wire, but let's keep the badges where they belong.

If the letter writer still feels he deserves a CIB, here is my suggestion: The next time he re-enlistment window opens up, talk to the commander. He should be able to give him the appropriate MOS that will allow him to be eligible for it. Unless he is willing to do that, I suggest he stop whining.

The infantry earned the right to wear a CIB by being infantry soldiers. If the writer is keen on changing Army regulations so that other MOSs are eligible for the CIB, then there are other avenues he can pursue instead of complaining in a letter.

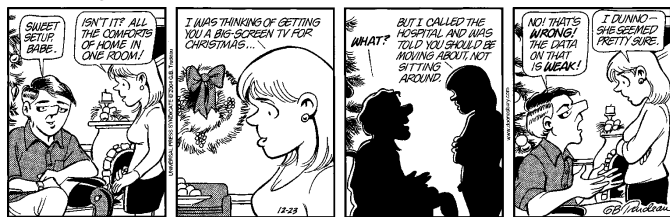
SGT. Michael C. Ramirez

Camp Falcon, Iraq

Worry about surviving, not CIB

I did my active duty as an infantryman in Fort Campbell, Ky., with the hard-core 1st Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, and with the 2nd Infantry Division Currahee Scouts up in the Demilitarized Zone in South Korea. I have been serving as a military policeman at Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad for the past 10 months.

Doonesbury



Tell us what you think

Stars and Stripes welcomes your comments on editorials and columns that are published in the newspaper, and values letters on topics of importance in the lives of our readers. All letters must be signed, and must include the writer's address or base and telephone number. Please limit all letters to 300 words. We reserve the right to edit letters for length, taste and clarity.

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Unit 45002: Minato-ku
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Via fax from Japan: (303) 438-8936;
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Exterior: (303) 438-8936;
DSN 229-3271

E-mail: letters@starsandstripes.com

Do I think that I deserve a Combat Infantryman Badge? Of course not. I clearly understand AR 600-8.2. What's so hard to understand? If you are not infantry, you just don't get it. Period. Back in garrison nobody wants to be a grunt, probably because we were always out in the field training, while everybody else, well almost everybody, was back on post enjoying everything else the Army had to offer. Now, all of a sudden, everybody wants to be infantry. Why? To wear the CIB because it looks cool on your uniform?

I'm not saying those in other military occupational specialties don't do as much as infantry units do out there, because everybody is doing an outstanding job, and if we all did our job without worrying about what award we will get for doing it, it would make everyone's life a whole lot easier. If you wanted to wear the CIB, you should have gone infantry. You knew that there was a slight possibility that you would be going to combat, unless you signed up just for the college money.

Guess what? This is reality. Welcome. Now, would you just please stop complaining about it and just keep doing the outstanding job every one of you has been doing so we can, one day, all be back home with our loved ones... with or without a CIB! And, yes, we are an Army of One.

SGT. Jaime Rodriguez

Abu Ghraib, Iraq

A complaint on complaining

That's if I've had it with all the whining letters and I've decided to throw in my two cents' worth. All my wrath is from selected letters to the editor from the past week.

The Combat Infantryman Badge is for infantry only (which I am not). Everyone who complains about not being authorized a CIB sounds like a little kid: "Mommy, mommy, I want what that man has." Good for you. When re-up time comes, utilize the Bonus Enrollment and Retraining program

and you can earn one, too. Why do you even care about awards/entitlements right now? Worry about everyone in your unit making it back to the loved alive.

■ Smoking is bad. People are complaining about the Marlboro man picture. I agree that smoking is bad (I don't smoke) but so are bullets, mortars, vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices and roadside bombs. I'd rather die smoke-free than die.

■ Kuwait. Are you kidding me? How's the yay-gay going? Yes, everyone there says they want to be here. So put your money where your mouth is and come join us in the real deal. So I won't be confused with a "poe," I am on my second tour in Iraq (I volunteered to come back), I am a Purple Heart recipient who's about to have my unit member by my father passed away because I was raised by my parents to honor my commitments. I have been over here more in the past two years than I've been with my wife and kids (when I both dearly love). I am not doing this for the awards (or lack thereof), I am doing this for the honor of serving my country, like my father and grandfather did before me.

Sp. Jonathan B. Numemaker

Iraq

What 'holiday' is it?

I went to a "holiday party" I have been wished a "happy holiday" over and over. The Scout leaders would like to bring a dozen "holiday cookies" to the Scout meeting. "Holiday" this and "holiday" that, I feel like yelling at the top of my lungs. "What holiday is it?"

It is, of course, the Christmas holiday. It's the Christmas holiday not only because the pope and religious prelates around the world said so, but also because the U.S. Congress and Post Office said so.

It is a federally recognized holiday called Christmas. In that respect, it's no different from the 4th of July, Memorial Day, etc.

Today 87 percent of Americans believe in Christmas. Of the remaining 13 percent, the vast majority, if wished a Merry Christmas, likely will say, "Thank you" and go on with their lives. That leaves a tiny minority that is trying to bring an end to Christmas as we know it in the United States.

Social positions are like combat positions in that more are simply abandoned to the enemy than overrun. Because the American Civil Liberties Union and a tiny percentage of hypersensitive people threaten every tradition of Christmas, you are more likely to be sued for wishing a co-worker or classmate a Merry Christmas than running a Ponzi scheme at the old-folks' home. So, to avoid the hassle, many just give in, like getting whining children what they want. But most parents know that the more you give in, the more they will whine. Sooner or later the crybabies have to be told that enough is enough.

So, Merry, Merry Christmas everybody. To the vast majority, take the greeting as it is intended, a message of hope, peace and joy, for a service has been born.

To the lunatic fringe, think of it as nothing more than glad tidings for the federal holiday that is, after all, Christmas.

Joerg Schumacher

Stuttgart, Germany

By GARRY TRUDEAU

OPINION

Pins on our lapels and hearts on our sleeves

BY RICK ATKINSON

WASHINGTON
One morning in 1966, when I was an eighth-grader at Gen. George S. Patton Jr. Junior High School at Fort Leavenworth, Kan., we were mustered onto the playground in a formation of huge black letters that spelled: WE BACK YOU. A helicopter appeared overhead, and a photographer leaped from the cockpit. The subsequent photograph, published in a newspaper, was meant to inspire the troops in Vietnam.

As the sons and daughters of professional Army officers, our impulse was to close ranks and stand where we were told to stand. For us the affirmation was not political, it was personal. We tried not to confuse the warriors with the war.

Yet over the years as the war dragged on, the dead stacked up and the country splintered, that distinction became harder to sustain. The suspicion that our soldiers were risking their lives in a bad, lost cause soon became so searing that many of us insisted the war was righteous and winnable. To admit otherwise felt like a betrayal of those we loved; it also implied that we had been duped. We closed ranks with the policy as well as with the troops. We conflated the warriors and the war. So did the country, in ways that became toxic.

Today the equivalent of "We back you" slogans can be found on military posts across the country, expressed in yellow ribbons and lapel pins and yard signs supporting the troops in Iraq. In a relatively small, volunteer Army, the agony of 1,300 dead and 10,000 wounded sears some communities



A U.S. Marine walks beneath a tangle of electrical wiring during a foot patrol in Ramadi, Iraq, on Sunday. For some in the States, keeping the warriors and the war untangled is hard.

more than others, and none more than the extended family that is the professional military.

Many feel a profound disquiet: at the hard truth that the central provocations for invading Iraq proved spurious; at the stress fractures appearing within the Army and Marine Corps — great armies are hard to build and easy to break; at the dearth of meaningful allied support in a robust coalition of the capable rather than a thin amalgam of the willing; and at the risk of another rift opening between the military and our larger republic.

Soldiers and their families also know, viscerally, that war is corrupting, even a justifiable or inevitable war. Eventually combat does bad things to good soldiers. Not that it makes them capable of atrocity — the overwhelming majority today are too balanced, too professional, too well led for that, although the rash of soldiers and Marines court-martialed or under investigation for various depredations in Iraq is unnerving. But war is corrosive of decency and nobility; it tarnishes the spirit. Perhaps the best example is Wilfred Owen, the great English poet who commanded a platoon in World War I.

Shortly before his death near the end of that war, Owen described sorting through incoming mail to his soldiers who had just been killed. "My senses are charred," he wrote. "I don't take the cigarette out of my mouth when I write Deceased over their letters."

Since before the invasion of Iraq in March 2003, military communities in both the active and reserve forces have closed ranks. For them, their core affirmation is again personal, not political, although they instinctively and legally follow the military hierarchy and the commander in chief. The senior officers among them, by tradition and training, offer their best advice on tactics and strategy, then how to the decisions of their superiors.

But as this war grinds on, as these dead stack up, soldiers and their families are faced with the appalling suspicion that their troops are risking their lives in a cause that is uncertain at best and illegitimate at worst.

While some voice private doubts, others insist — often with increasing stridency — that the war is justified, that the insurgency can be crushed and that naysaying undermines both national will and troop morale. I admire their steadfast faith, even as I recognize the dilemma. To disbelieve seems too much like betrayal. Skepticism and dissent appear inimical to service and sacrifice.

Keeping the warriors and the war untangled is extraordinarily difficult, especially in and emotionally. All that most of us can do is to mean precisely what we say: We back you.

Rick Atkinson, a former staff writer for The Washington Post (where this column first appeared), is the author of "An Army at Dawn" and "In the Company of Soldiers."

Peterson gateway to real news remained closed

There are times when it's utterly humiliating to be a working journalist. This is one of those times.

Media fixation (OK, partial media fixation, to be precise) with the Scott Peterson case was, or should have been, an embarrassment to all Americans, journalists and nonjournalists alike.

For the cable news networks and the tabloids, Peterson's trial presented a free key to a Treasury Department printing press — an unfettered opportunity to profit from titillation by scandal-mongering, shock-schlock journalism of the lowest caliber. Sadler yet, it was a missed opportunity to teach American news consumers something of value about an issue that may actually touch their lives.

There was something about the Peterson case that could have been reported, but rarely if ever was, that might have helped people. Laci Peterson was hardly alone as a pregnant woman murdered by a spouse or partner. She may have been somewhat unusual in that she was economically well-off (or so it seemed), poster-girl pretty and apparently in what was trumpeted to all the world as a blissful union with Scott.

But the gruesome truth is, she was emblematic of a terrible (and preventable) trend in American life. Studies have shown that a leading cause of death among pregnant women is homicide committed by a spouse or partner. And despite having lived through two years of Scott Peterson's inhabiting our living rooms, too few Americans learned this while watching his murder trial.

Last year, The Associated Press reported, "Homicide was found to be the leading cause of death for pregnant women in Maryland, according to a March 2001 study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association.... [N]ationwide, the maternal mortality rate was just 9.9 percent in 1999, the most recent year for which statistics are available."

The AP release continued to say, "The [JAMA] study reinforced at least two earlier studies that found homicide to be the top killer of pregnant women. In Cook County, Ill., 26 percent of the 95 deaths of pregnant women recorded between 1986 and 1989 (were murders). In New York, 25 percent of the 293 deaths among pregnant women between 1987 and 1991 were homicides."

Homicide a leading cause of death for pregnant women? Did the cable channels or tabloids make this clear during the trial? Or were they too busy informing us about Scott

and Amber Frey, or detailing every meaningless personal interaction among the jurors? I fear it's the latter.

A Web site called Grade the News, which monitors San Francisco media, sported one of the more interesting articles I've seen about the Peterson case. It quoted reporters who covered the story and later confessed to experiencing major embarrassment about their chosen life's work. One female reporter was quoted as saying, "I believed, when I started covering this, that it was totally sensationalistic and overcovered and flimsy in terms of affecting people's lives."

Then the Web site added, "More than a year ago, Grade the News surveyed journalists converging on Mr. Peterson's hometown of Modesto for the prenatal hearing. They rated the story moderately interesting, but by and large unimportant."

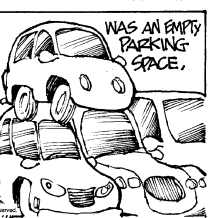
"One reporter, who asked not to be named, said bluntly: 'It is a shame that we,

as newspaper [reporters] and our friends in the broadcast world, circle around this story in the name of journalism. Few of us care about the story or its implications — lack thereof, I say.'"

So why do they cover it? Ratings, readership, organizations desperate to grab viewers/readers at any cost. There's little left that's noble about the Fourth Estate (or at least large sections of it). Cable news and tabloid periodicals, if they ever did, certainly do not now have as their raison d'être, to educate Americans to salient facts in the world around them. Or perhaps they do in "slow" news periods, in between "Trials of the Century" (of which there have been a half-dozen in the last decade.) What will they do now that Scott Peterson's story is nearing its end? Thank God, they must be saying, there's no shortage of trash news.

Bonnie Erbe is a TV host and writes this column for Scripps Howard News Service.

Mallard Fillmore



BY BRUCE TINSLEY

Horoscope

If life is a party, the Gemini moon is a consummate hostess, buzzing around to make sure we're all mixing and mingling. Don't expect anything of depth to be exchanged — but doesn't that take the pressure off? It's so much easier to make that phone call or show up at the meeting when you know it's going to be a breeze (if superficial) encounter.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY (December 23)

You do the moon this year. Getting in touch with your wilderness creates more harmony and fun in your world. This spring, the stars hint you unearth unused abilities such as painting, musical talents, writing and the ability to make money through the stock market. You have a fantastic love match in Cancer and Virgo.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

The team chemistry is right on today. It's astounding how well you can get along when everyone is working toward a mutual goal. Even someone you thought you were basically incompatible with shows you a new side.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

Make the best of a changing situation. It will be a while before you know how things will settle in, so don't spend a bunch of money on what you might need. An organized Virgo can help you through the transition.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21)

Mentally, you're leaping into the future while physically you're doing much the same thing you did yesterday. Singles could put an end to serial monogamy by asking someone for a more permanent relationship.

CANCER (June 22-July 22)

Inheritance figures into today's equation. There are some things you earn in obvious ways and other things you earn in not-so-obvious ways. But you can bet that any gifts you receive now are well deserved.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

Your strong opinions and artistic style put you in the minority, but this only

makes you feel more special. Questions of etiquette arise. When in doubt, give a 20 percent tip. Your generosity wings right back at you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

Success is born out of the trust you inspire in others. And why shouldn't they trust you? You're impartial and committed to the public good. You'll get the chance to make a closing statement and leave a lasting impression.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)

Be on high alert for signals that it's your turn to step in and take over a nasty situation. As soon as the powers that be leave an opening, you can grab the reins and steer things back toward the promised land.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21)

High-stakes ventures are favored. There's no excuse for passing up an opportunity to show someone your work. Risking rejection is just part of success — ask any successful person. Take a chance.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

There's no more productive thing you can do than clean up a mess. Turn up the tunes, and tackle it. Until you make a commitment to get organized, useful opportunities will fall through the cracks.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

Re-examine and revise your list of things you'd like to accomplish in this lifetime. If you're one of the few Capricorns in the world who hasn't yet made your list, don't wait! It's probably the most important exercise you'll do.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

It's tempting to be part of the nutcase. But to avoid wasting time navigating through chaos, choose a road you know for certain is not under construction. Go for the straightforward tasks you can accomplish in an hour.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

You don't need to play hard to get. The fact that you are hard to get is implied already in your busy, fabulous lifestyle. Whether it's a romantic partner, a job or another situation, be yourself, and let it come to you.

Creators Syndicate

Holiday Mathis



Calvin and Hobbes



Jump Start



Zits



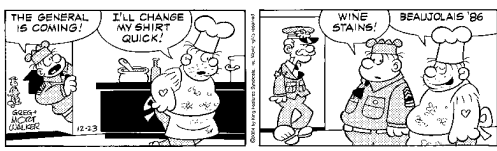
Cathy



Hi and Lois



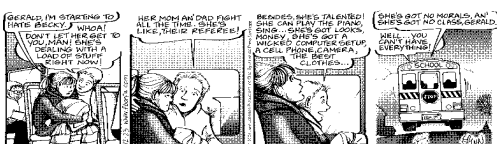
Beetle Bailey



Red and Rover



Better or Worse



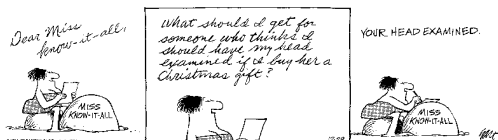
Peanuts



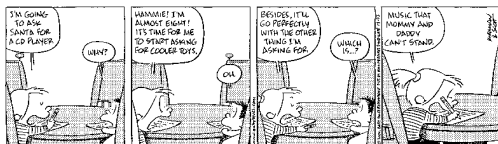
Fox trot



B.C.



Baby Bites



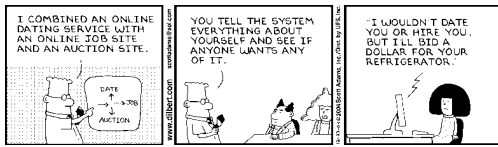
Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



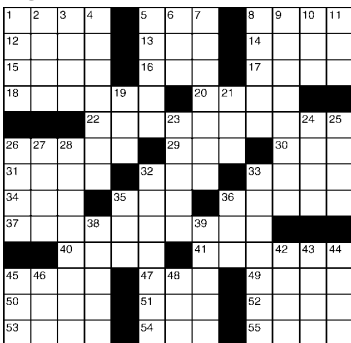
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

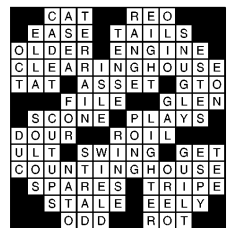
- Beyond control
- Round Table address
- Kohoutek feature
- Creche trio
- Farm implement
- In a bad way
- "do"
- Piratic potable
- Prepare a casserole
- Put aside
- Related
- Hard candy
- Street's boss
- Dryly humorous
- Lemieux milieu
- Unctuous
- Put into words
- Rounded handle
- Altar affirmative
- Depot (Abbr.)
- cum laude
- Felon
- Indigent
- Garland
- Break ground
- Lumox
- Killer whale
- Messenger's vehicle
- Squid squirt
- Actress Madeline
- Prognosticator
- "CSI" evidence
- Black, in verse

Down

- Writer Kingsley
- Report-card heading
- Look longingly
- Party pooper
- Petruchio's challenge
- Debtor's letters
- Knot again?
- Leg bone
- Comic born
- Irwin Kniberg
- Sort
- Caustic solution
- Forefront
- Crucial
- Master, in jungle movies

- Greenspan subj.
- Ms. McEntire
- Dudge
- Verdi opera
- Laggard
- Performance-enhancing drug
- Amateur songfest
- Sellout sign
- Chaps
- Garden shelter
- "The Trial" writer
- Unexciting
- Reverberate
- Horace or Herbie
- Big Bird's home?
- Whopper
- Abby's sis

Answer to Previous Puzzle



12-23

CRYPTOQUIP

RI NROT SUJUCRNHC QHN
RONA WURDHY RNHWC.
CXAPDY TAP SUT WAJH

IAJ CXRSSROQ IDHUC?

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: I DON'T EVER CARRY AROUND COINS. I GUESS YOU MIGHT SAY I'M AVERSE TO CHANGE.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: I equals F

Abuse of any kind can't be allowed

Dear Abby: You printed a letter from "Beaten Down in Oklahoma," who said that although she had a history of severe depression, her verbally abusive husband refused to allow her to get medication "because he didn't believe in it." He told her she was "worthless" and said he only kept her around so he could be near the kids. That letter could have been written by me five years ago.

I was nine years into a physically and emotionally abusive marriage. I heard the same things from my husband.

And afterward, when he was trying to make up, he too always said he "didn't mean it."

Well, it turned out he did mean it. Once he found his next victim—a younger woman—he walked out. As he left, he announced it was because everything he'd said had been the truth.

You should have advised "Beaten Down" to see a lawyer in

addition to a counselor, while she still has a shred of self-esteem. Following my divorce, I got counseling. Once I felt better about myself, I felt a wonderful man. We're married now.

—Full of Hope

in Georgia

Dear Abby



Dear Full of Hope: I heard from many readers who identified with that letter and felt it was important for her to get away. Read on:

Dear Abby: A husband who tells his wife she's worthless and stupid is using verbal abuse to wear her down and control her. Marriage counseling and psychiatrists won't help. The man has low self-esteem and tries to make himself appear powerful and intelligent by making his wife feel inadequate. Every day she stays with him is far more harmful to the children than taking them and leaving.

—Diane in Pennsylvania

Dear Diane: It's true; children model their behavior on what they're exposed to.

Dear Abby: As a clinical social worker and therapist with a strong background in the field of domestic violence, I must comment on your response to "Beaten Down in Oklahoma." Your suggestion of marital counseling is not recommended in such situations. It can render the victims more vulnerable to abuse and manipulation after they leave the counselor's office. Your suggestion of going alone and building her own strength is helpful. Contacting her local domestic violence organization for support is also recommended.

—LSCW in Maine
Dear LSCW: Thank you for the input. The toll-free number for the National Domestic Violence Hotline is (800) 799-7233.

Letters for this column—with your name and phone number—should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 6940, Los Angeles CA 90069. Readers can write to Abby on the Internet at: <http://www.ueexpress.com/dearabby>
Universal Press Syndicate

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

NEEMY

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OSKET

www.jumble.com

MANTED

www.jumble.com

SETTEA

Answers tomorrow

Yesterday's Jumbles: PIETY SWOOP STANZA ABUSED
Answer: When they drove by their alma mater they—
PASSED THE PAST

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answers tomorrow

Parents' problems are their own

Dear Annie: I am 26 years old and living in my parents' home while I attend medical school full time. My mother is miserably in her marriage to my father (he is significantly older than she is), and it's beginning to take its toll on me.

Every single day, Mom complains that Dad ignores her, doesn't care about her, and on and on. She remembers every wrong anyone has ever done to her and nurses grudges. I have been putting up with this misery for a few years now, and it's getting worse. I cannot stand living here, but I cannot afford to be on my own.

I love my mother and want to see her happy, but she carries around a lot of anger and resentment. My father is the "king of oblivion."

He walks around as if nothing is wrong. When I suggest to Mom that she see a counselor, she gets defensive and claims she'll just "live out her life this way." What

Annie's Mailbox



can I do to make my life, as well as my parents' lives, more positive?

—Desperate

in New Jersey

Dear Desperate: You cannot make your parents happy. They are the only ones who can do the work and make the changes that will improve their marriage. Also consider the possibility that your parents are comfortable with this level of misery. Some people derive great satisfaction in complaining.

Don't get sucked in to your parents' problems. As soon as you can afford to move out, do so.

Dear Annie: I am newly married, and my in-laws have come to my home for dinner twice so far. My husband has a little sister, 5 years old. "Cindy" is a picky eater, but my real problem is with my mother-in-law.

The first time they came to dinner, Mom fed Cindy a bolo-

gna sandwich instead of having her eat what I served. Yesterday, they came again, and Cindy was carrying a McDonald's Happy Meal. Yet Mom frets that Cindy is unwilling to try new foods.

I worked very hard on my dinner and was upset that Cindy was permitted to eat junk while we enjoyed a good meal. Am I wrong to be offended?

—Frustrated in West Virginia
Dear Frustrated: It's natural that you want to impress your in-laws with your cooking, but Cindy is 5 years old, and it sounds as if she would not appreciate it. Few children that age like to experiment with new foods.

Have you considered the possibility that Mom believes Cindy would reject your cuisine and she wants to avoid hurting your feelings? While it would be nice if she indulged the girl with something healthier, there's no reason for you to be offended.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Am Landmark column. Please e-mail your questions to annie mailbox@comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045.
Creators Syndicate

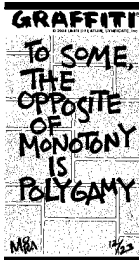
Family Circus



12-23

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www.familycircus.com

"... Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse ..."

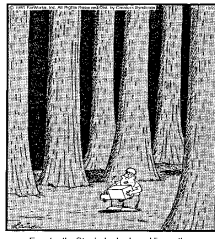


Dennis the Menace



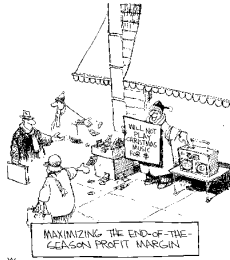
"THIS YEAR I GOT HIM TO PUT IT IN WRITING ... AND HIS SIGNATURE!"

The Far Side



Eventually, Slovic looked up. His mother was nowhere in sight, and this was certainly no longer the toy department.

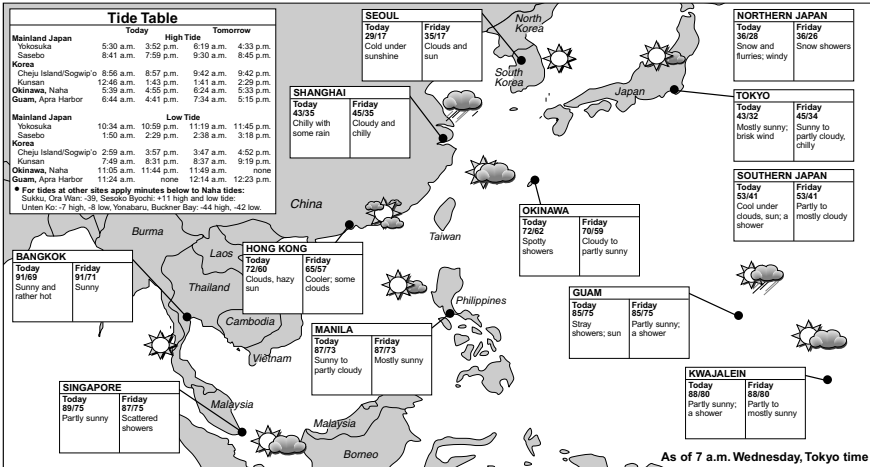
Non Sequitur



MAXIMIZING THE END-OF-THE-SEASON PROFIT MARGIN

The Pacific Forecast

All maps, forecasts and data provided by AccuWeather, Inc. © 2004
AccuWeather.com



Extended Forecasts

TOKYO

Saturday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 45, low 36.
Sunday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 49, low 34.

KADENA

Saturday: Showers, high 68, low 57.
Sunday: Showers, high 68, low 57.

SEoul

Saturday: Mostly sunny, high 30, low 13.
Sunday: Mostly sunny, high 30, low 14.

MANILA

Saturday: Partly sunny, high 87, low 73.
Sunday: Partly sunny, high 87, low 73.

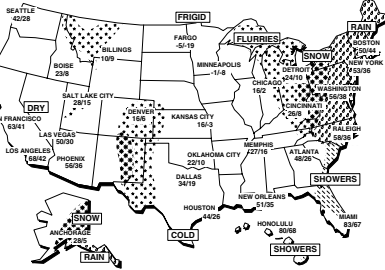
HAGATNA

Saturday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 70, low 77.
Sunday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 87, low 75.

Tuesday's USA Temperatures

CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW
Albuquerque	47/26	Los Angeles	68/48
Amarillo	45/20	Little Rock	58/40
Anchorage	22/21	Louisville	54/35
Asheville	55/28	Miami	72/64
Baltimore	41/30	Milwaukee	34/48
Birmingham	63/48	Nashville	52/42
Bismarck	5/11	New York	38/34
Boise	36/22	Omaha	28/14
Boston	32/30	Orlando	70/54
Brownsville	85/65	Philadelphia	41/32
Buffalo	37/30	Phoenix	67/44
Burlington	24/18	Pittsburgh	42/35
Charleston, SC	59/40	Portland, OR	48/36
Charlotte	55/33	Portland, ME	25/20
Cleveland	42/28	Salt Lake City	32/17
Columbus, OH	46/32	St. Louis	49/17
Duluth	15/10	San Antonio	76/48
El Paso	64/40	San Diego	66/50
Hartford	29/22	San Juan	86/72
Helena	31/15	Tampa	70/55
Indianapolis	48/22	Tulsa	53/26
Jacksonville	66/44	Washington	44/34
Kansas City	38/13	Wichita	47/17

Thursday, December 23



U.S. Extended Forecast

An active weather day is in store for much of the East Thursday as a potent storm system progresses northward out of the Tennessee Valley. Rain will spread from the Southeast into New England; thunderstorms will rumble across the Carolinas into Florida. With the arrival of colder air in the Northeast, the backside of the rain will change over to snow. In addition, flurries will occur across the Ohio Valley as precipitation wraps around the storm system. Meanwhile, the bitterly cold conditions will persist across the northern Plains into the Midwest. Flurries will overshadow the Rockies, while plenty of sun shines across the West Coast. Much of the nation will be dry on Christmas.

Thursday's Pacific Temperatures

CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW
Bangkok	91/69	Iwakuni	49/35	Sasebo NB	52/40
Beijing	26/18	Kadena AB	72/62	Sapporo	36/28
Camp Casey	30/14	Kunsan AB	35/24	Seoul	29/17
Christchurch	58/39	Kwajalein	88/80	Shanghai	43/35
Diego Garcia	87/78	Manila	87/73	Shanghai	89/75
Hagatna	85/75	Misawa AB	35/27	Sydney	79/64
Hanoi	80/64	Osaka	31/15	Taegu	42/24
Hong Kong	72/60	Perth	78/60	Taipei	74/57
Honolulu	80/68	Pusan	45/29	Tokyo	43/32

Thursday's World Temperatures

CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW
Budapest	33/32	Kabul	39/13	Nairobi	80/55
Buenos Aires	88/68	Kiev	21/19	New Delhi	71/43
Cairo	69/47	Kuwait	69/46	Oslo	38/22
Cancun	82/67	London	52/43	Paris	50/41
Cape Town	85/66	Madrid	47/40	Rio de Janeiro	72/63
Geneva	49/44	Mexico City	70/45	Rome	48/40
Istanbul	36/30	Montreal	39/18	St. Petersburg	24/20
Jerusalem	50/45	Madagash	91/75	Stockholm	34/29
Johannesburg	74/54	Moscow	17/11	Warsaw	37/36



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SCOREBOARD

AFN TV & Radio

Thursday

AFN-Sports, 3 a.m.-College football: Champ Sports Bowl, Syracuse vs. Georgia Tech, Atlanta, Fla., 3 a.m.

AFN-Atlantic, 9 a.m.-College football: GMCAC Bowl, Memphis vs. Bowling Green at Mobile, Ala.

AFN-Sports, 9 a.m.-College football: Illinois vs. Minnesota at St. Louis, Mo.

AFN-Sports, noon-11A. Memphis at Mobile, Ala. (dtd).

AFN-Sports, 9 p.m.-College football: GMCAC Bowl, Memphis vs. Bowling Green at Mobile, Ala. (dtd).

Friday

AFN-Sports, 2 a.m.-NBA: Denver at Seattle (dtd) at Pittsburgh.

AFN-Atlantic, 9 a.m.-College basketball: Richmond at St. Mary's; Marshall at Fort Belvoir.

AFN-Sports, 11 a.m.-College basketball: Princeton at Miami.

AFN-Sports, 1230 p.m.-NBA: Miami at Sacramento.

AFN-Sports, 3 p.m.-11A. Inside the NBA: Portland vs. Cincinnati vs. Marshall at Fort Belvoir, Texas (dtd).

AFN-Sports, 830 a.m.-College football: Las Vegas Bowl, UCLA vs. Wyoming at Las Vegas, Nev. (dtd).

Saturday

AFN-Sports, 630 a.m.-NFL: TXU NFL Friday.

AFN-Atlantic, 9 a.m.-NFL: Green Bay at Minnesota at Pittsburgh.

AFN-Sports, 3 p.m.-11A. Inside the NBA: Hawaii Bowl, Alabama-Birmingham at Hawaii.

All Times Japan and Korea Standard Time. All times subject to change. Visit www.mysafn.net for more information.

College basketball

AP Men's Top 25

The top 25 teams in the Associated Press men's basketball poll. The top 10 teams are listed in parentheses. All teams are subject to change. Visit www.mysafn.net for more information.

Record Pts Pts

1. Illinois (50) 79 1,058

2. Kansas (15) 69 1,027

3. North Carolina (15) 61 1,026

4. Duke (15) 61 1,026

5. Kentucky (15) 61 1,026

6. Pittsburgh (15) 61 1,026

7. Washington (15) 61 1,026

8. Gonzaga (15) 61 1,026

9. Texas (15) 61 1,026

10. Louisville (15) 61 1,026

11. Alabama (15) 61 1,026

12. Georgia Washington (15) 61 1,026

13. Mississippi St. (15) 61 1,026

14. Virginia (15) 61 1,026

15. North Carolina (15) 61 1,026

16. Texas (15) 61 1,026

17. Louisville (15) 61 1,026

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19. Georgia Washington (15) 61 1,026

20. Mississippi St. (15) 61 1,026

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48. Mississippi St. (15) 61 1,026

49. Virginia (15) 61 1,026

50. North Carolina (15) 61 1,026

No. 24 Maryland and a Maryland

No. 25 Virginia vs. Loyola Marymount

No. 12 Washington vs. Houston

No. 13 Kentucky vs. Louisville

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No

Iverson hits 50 again, but Lakers lose to jazz

The Associated Press

Allen Iverson was unstoppable again, hitting long jumpers and running foulouts from every angle on the court.

Yao Ming just parked his big body under the basket and made one easy layup after another.

With a dazzling display of quickness and shooting, the 6-foot Iverson scored 51 points Monday night, becoming only the seventh player in NBA history to reach at least 50 in consecutive games.

But he fouled out with 4.5 seconds left, setting up Mehmet Okur's winning free throws in Utah's 103-101 victory at Philadelphia.

"If a guy's going well, you milk it. You just keep running the same play over and over until they stop it," Iverson said.

That's exactly what the Houston Rockets did, going down low time and time again to the 7-foot-6 Yao, who finished with the season-high 40 points in a 114-102 victory over the visiting Raptors.

"It seemed like he was just imbedded in the paint," Toronto's Eric Adams said. "It seemed like he spent 20 seconds in there sometimes."

Tracy McGrady added 34 points and 12 rebounds for Houston, which set a season high for points. Yao also grabbed 10 rebounds and shot 13-for-16 from the field.

Only one of Yao's baskets — an 11-foot turn-around jumper late in the fourth quarter — came from more than 9 feet out. He hit five layups and four dunks, one 5-foot shot and two 9-footers. He also made 14 of 18 free throws.

At Philadelphia, Iverson followed up his 54-point game Saturday in Milwaukee with another gem, becoming the first Sixers player to score 50 in back-to-back games and the first Philadelphia player to accomplish the feat since Will Chamberlain for the Warriors in 1962.

Last NBA player to score 50 points in consecutive games was Antawn Jamison in December 2000 with Golden State. Iverson joined Rick Barry, Elgin Baylor, Chamberlain, Bernard King, Michael Jordan and Jamison as the only players to accomplish the feat.

Iverson scored on a variety of shots, hitting three-pointers, off-balance drives and a reverse left-handed layup that brought the crowd to its feet. He went 18-for-31 from the field, including 4-for-6 from three-point range, and 11-for-17 from the line. He also had six assists.

"He puts up 50 points two nights in a row and he's still looking for us," teammate Kyle Korver said. "It's pretty amazing."

Iverson scored 21 in the third quarter to help the Sixers overcome a 16-point halftime deficit, only to watch from the bench as the comeback fell short. After Okur hit his foul shot Willie Green missed a runner, ending Utah's seven-game road losing streak and three-game skid overall.

Bulls 92, Trail Blazers 87: At Chicago, Ben Gordon scored 23 points with Michael Jordan in attendance, and the Bulls won their fourth straight for the first time since Jordan's 1998 championship team won 13 in a row.

Carter eager to show Nets his best stuff

The Associated Press

FORT MILL, S.C. — Vince Carter, still a strained left ankle, will be ready to keep him from playing Tuesday night when the New Jersey Nets face the Charlotte Bobcats.

But Carter can't wait to play for his own team and prove he hasn't lost a step or an inch on his jump.

"I'm going to make a lot of people eat their words when it's time," the former Raptor said

after his first practice with the Nets.

Carter was traded from Toronto to New Jersey on Friday for Aaron Williams, Eric Williams, Alonzo Mourning and two conditional first-round picks. The deal was finalized Monday. Mourning probably will be bought out of his contract.

For the 27-year-old Carter, this is a new beginning after 6½ sea-

sons in Toronto, where he was the face of the franchise.

Carter's role with New Jersey will be much different. The Nets are Jason Kidd's team first, then Richard Jefferson's. That doesn't bode five-time All-Star Carter.

"I'm happy with it," Carter said. "I'm just there to be that third guy to help out. Now who are you going to worry about more? It's going to be fun."

NBA roundup

Allen Iverson was unstoppable again, hitting long jumpers and running foulouts from every angle on the court. Yao Ming just parked his big body under the basket and made one easy layup after another. With a dazzling display of quickness and shooting, the 6-foot Iverson scored 51 points Monday night, becoming only the seventh player in NBA history to reach at least 50 in consecutive games. But he fouled out with 4.5 seconds left, setting up Mehmet Okur's winning free throws in Utah's 103-101 victory at Philadelphia.

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Bulls 92, Trail Blazers 87: At Chicago, Ben Gordon scored 23 points with Michael Jordan in attendance, and the Bulls won their fourth straight for the first time since Jordan's 1998 championship team won 13 in a row.

76ers guard Allen Iverson questions a technical foul on him. He scored 50 points, but he fouled out late in the game and his foul led to the Jazz's winning points.

Suns 107, Nuggets 105: Amare Stoudemire had 32 points and nine rebounds, and Quentin Richardson tipped in a shot in the buzzer to help Phoenix extend its winning streak to nine.

Richardson finished with 19 points and seven rebounds, and Steve Nash added 15 points and 10 assists to help Phoenix's second nine-game winning streak this season. The Suns have won 14 of 19 and eight straight on the road, one short of the team record.

Andre Miller had 23 points and 11 assists, and Kenyon Martin added 22 points and 11 rebounds for Denver, which played without starters Carmelo Anthony and Marcus Camby.

Grizzlies 82, Lakers 72: Shane Battier had 17 points, Mike Miller scored five in the final 24 and Memphis beat the Lakers at Los Angeles for the first time after 18 losses.

Kobe Bryant had 11 points, eight assists and six rebounds. The Lakers shot 33.9 percent from the field, including 5.4-for-28 from three-point range, and didn't make a field goal in the final 6:52.

Wizards 103, Warriors 101: Gilbert Arenas drove the length of the floor, got past top Golden State defender Mickael Pietrus and scored an acrobatic layup with less than a second left to visit Washington.

Arenas burned his former team for 29 points, seven rebounds and five assists as the Wizards held on despite blowing a 14-point lead in the second half.

NBA scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division			
	W	L	Pct
New York	13	542	
Boston	12	478	19
Philadelphia	10	417	3
Toronto	4	433	44
New Jersey	2	476	304

Southeast Division			
	W	L	Pct
Miami	19	731	
Washington	14	693	31
Orlando	10	583	4
Charlotte	6	440	10
Atlanta	4	267	14

Central Division			
	W	L	Pct
Cleveland	14	583	—
Detroit	12	522	16
Indiana	12	462	8
Chicago	8	348	51
Memphis	5	285	65

Western Conference

Pacific Division			
	W	L	Pct
San Antonio	10	500	
Dallas	10	640	4
Houston	12	480	8
Memphis	12	444	9
New Orleans	8	587	17

Northwest Division			
	W	L	Pct
Seattle	15	652	3
Minnesota	12	520	6
Denver	12	520	6
Portland	12	480	8
Utah	11	423	8

Southwest Division			
	W	L	Pct
Phoenix	22	380	—
Sacramento	16	496	8
L.A. Lakers	13	542	8
L.A. Clippers	11	520	8
Golden State	7	280	15

Monday's games			
Utah 124, Toronto 103			
Chicago 82, Portland 67			
Phoenix 107, Denver 105			
Memphis 82, L.A. Lakers 72			
Washington 101, Golden State 101			
Portland 12, Dallas 8			
San Antonio 11, Atlanta 10			
Chicago 82, Cleveland 76			
New Jersey 81, Boston 77			
Boston 81, New York 77			
Washington 82, Sacramento 77			
New Orleans 81, L.A. Clippers 77			

Tuesday's games			
Utah at Toronto			
New York at Boston			
Philadelphia at Indiana			
San Antonio at Orlando			
Cleveland at Detroit			
Portland at Milwaukee			
Charlotte at Houston			
Golden State at L.A. Lakers			
New Orleans at L.A. Clippers			
Minnesota at Phoenix			
Memphis at Portland			
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Utah at Toronto			
New York at Boston			
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Cleveland at Detroit			
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Miami at Sacramento			

12, Curry 1-1 4-4 18, Mitchell 0-12 4-5 17, Duhon 1-3 0-0 3, Gordon 10-15 1-1 23, Chan- dler 1-2 0-0 2, Nocioni 1-7 3-4 5, Griffin 0-2 0-0 0. Totals 35-75 18-22 92.				
Portland	18	32	13	24-87
Chicago	26	23	24	19-92

HOME TEAM

A WEEKLY LOOK AT LOCAL SPORTS

At sea, school still in session

Prep teams learning, sometimes the hard way, in Pacificwide tournament

BY DAVE ORNAUER

Stars and Stripes

FOR three base high school teams, this week's Ocan Pacificwide Open Holiday Basketball Tournament has been a different sort of classroom.

"Sort of School of Hard Knocks 101," tournament director Tony Mason said of Seoul American's boys and girls teams and Ocan American Interscholastic Activities Conference play: older players, bigger, stronger, more aggressive, physical and experienced, who regularly make the moves and plays they're just starting to learn.

The learning curve has varied by team.

■ Seoul American's boys played last time's two-point defending Far East Class AA tournament champions. They not only won a game—the first by a high school team since the tournament began in 1987—but clobbered Korea's Suwon Trail Blazers 68-42 and cut a 22-point deficit against Camp Humphreys to six before falling 93-83.

■ Seoul American's girls lost their opener by 20 points to Ocan American but then fell by a combined seven points in their next three games. In a two-point loss to Camp Humphreys and a one-point setback to Yongsan Garrison, the Falcons' chances to win in the closing seconds.

The Falcons broke through on Tuesday. Led by senior Janet Daniels' 21 points, the girls joined the boys team in the win column with a 55-41 victory over Suwon.

■ The Ocan American boys have had the roughest time, losing by 66 points to Yongsan and 45 to Korea's Kunsan Wolf Pack.

But players, coaches and tournament officials said the experience in beneficial.

"They learn individually as players and collectively as a team," Seoul American boys coach Steve Boyd said. "This is growth."

"These guys are helping us out," added Ocan American boys coach Bruce Collins. "We're run-

ning our plays against a higher level of opposition. Our growth shows. It makes all the difference in the world. It's all positive."

When Pacificwide open tournaments such as the Martin Luther King on Okinawa have opened their doors to high school teams, they've been a platform for the younger players' experience and growth.

Since 1995, Kadena and Kubasaki High Schools on Okinawa have played in the MLK. Only a few times did their boys or girls teams make the playoff round. Kadena's and Kubasaki's girls placed third and fourth in the MLK last year, the highest any prep team has finished there.

When Ocan American entered its boys and girls teams in the 2002 Ocan tournament, each finished 0-5 in round-robin play and failed to win any playoff games.

But players and coaches say it isn't about wins and losses; it's about what they learn.

Seoul American's girls dominate KAIAC. They've won the league title and postseason tournament yearly since 1993 and finished in the final four of the Far East Class AA Tournament seven consecutive times.

The Falcons' closest game in this KAIAC season was a 31-point victory over Ocan American. Coach Charlotte Hicks said she wanted something a little tougher, and the Ocan tournament has given just that to a team that will host the Class AA tournament in February.

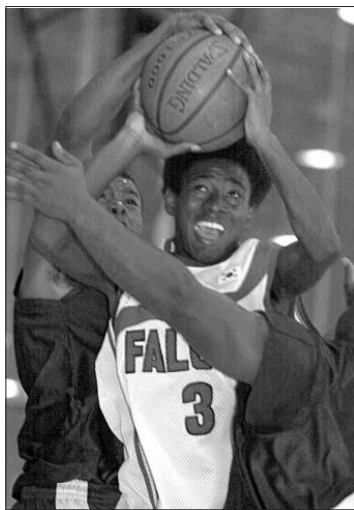
"To get that competition, we enter this tournament and others to try to get us ready. I'm up for it."

The teams were an attention magnet among post-level players this week. Said Su-

Smith, "Seoul American girls basketball coach said, 'You're young, they're young, they have a lot to prove against grown men. But they don't have anything to lose—and that's what makes them dangerous.'"

"Even though we beat them by 20 points," Defenders guard Kasey "Jo-Jo" Daniels said of the Falcons girls, "they fought all the way to the end."

But the tournament has risk; fear of injury while facing more aggressive players sometimes can lead to intimidation. That's why players must "keep it real," said Ocan American senior guard Chris Durham. "Everybody



DAVE ORNAUER/Stars and Stripes

Seoul American's Jamal Mohn (3) tries to shoot between Suwon's Desmond Kirby, left, and Maurice Jackson on Sunday in the Ocan Pacificwide Open Holiday Basketball Tournament at Ocan Air Base, South Korea. Mohn and the Falcons beat Suwon 68-42, but to coach Steve Boyd, whose team became the first prep team to host a post-level team in the tournament, entering was about improving fundamentals.

knows their limits. You don't try to match their physical play but stay within yourself. I'm not intimidated at all. Others, you can see they are, but you can see them play better as they play more against these guys."

Mason and other tournament officials said they took pains to impress on post-team coaches how they, too, can help with the prep teams' growth.

Injuries are "a concern to us but in our coaches' meeting, we tell them the primary purpose of high school teams here is to help them progress and develop," he said.

Coaches and players try to do their part with mentoring the high school players.

In Ocan's 79-55 victory over Seoul American's boys, "I take my guys to play hard and let them know how it feels, give them something real, show them what it's like," Defenders coach Tony

Jones said. "If we laid down, it wouldn't do them any good."

Sometimes a military player will get a high schooler one-on-one during a break in the action and impart "small hints" to help improve the younger player's fundamentals, said Ocan swingman Ramon Moss.

"I'm happy to help them with that," he said. "If you truly love the game, you don't mind giving back to it. They're the next generation."

Wherever the three prep squads finish, the lessons they learn this week are priceless, Collins said.

"We're learning a lot running plays against defenses we haven't seen," he said. "We're learning to slow it down, think about running the plays, don't feel the pressure and have fun."

"We'll be a lot better team" after the holiday break.

E-mail Dave Ornauer at: ornauid@starsandstripes.osd.mil

Inter-service basketball Ocan Pacificwide Open Holiday Tournament

At Ocan Fitness and Sports Center Ocan Air Base South Korea Men's double-elimination playoffs

Tuesday's games

Game 1-Anderson Air Force Base, Guam, 65, Spotlight Okinawa, 58
Game 2-Camp Humphreys, South Korea, 91, Yongsan Garrison, South Korea, 77
Game 3-Kunsan Air Base, South Korea, 81, Suwon Air Base, South Korea, 57
Game 4-Anderson 88, Ocan Air Base, South Korea, 69

Wednesday's games

Game 6-Yongsan vs. Suwon
Game 7-Spotlight vs. Camp Humphreys
Game 8-Ocan vs. Game 5 winner
Game 9-Anderson vs. Kunsan
Game 10-Game 7 winner vs. Game 8 winner

Thursday's games

Game 11-Game 9 loser vs. Game 10 winner
Game 12-Game 5 winner vs. Game 11 winner, if Game 9 winner loses Game 10

Tuesday's summaries

Anderson 65, Spotlight 58. Leading scorers-Anderson: Clifford Claybrooks 15, Michael Walters 13, Maurice Harris 12 (all second half); Spotlight: Justin Brown 17, Andre Lucas 12 (all second half); Peter Jackson 10, Aubrie Daphney 10.

Camp Humphreys 91, Yongsan 77

Half-time: Camp Humphreys 42, Yongsan 28. Leading scorers-Camp Humphreys: Maurice Graham 21, (four three-point goals), Jerry Flowers 11, Yongsan: Steve Bartley 23 (three three-point goals), Terry Stephens 15, Ken Johnson 13, noteworthy-Ramun Rebels committed 16 first-half turnovers to help build a 34-18 lead after four minutes before halftime.

Kunsan 81, Suwon 57

Half-time: Kunsan 42, Suwon 28. Leading scorers-Kunsan: James Berts 20, Corie Fletcher 17, Suwon: Josh Smith 14, Quincy Randolph 12, Gaston Grey 10.

Anderson 88, Ocan 69

Half-time: Anderson 48, Ocan 28. Leading scorers-Anderson: Michael Walters 28 (five three-point goals), Kevin Harris 22 (10-of-12 free throw line), Dean Johnson 10, Clifford Claybrooks 10, Ocan: Ramon Moss 17 (13 first half, Ryan Vaughn 17, noteworthy-Camp featured 48 fouls and five fouls-out.

Kunsan 77, Camp Humphreys 73

Half-time: Kunsan 39, Camp Humphreys 32. Leading scorers-Kunsan: Corie Fletcher 22, Aaron Hunter 12 (10 second half), James Berts 12, Camp Humphreys: Wallace Butts 16, George 12, Maurice Graham 10, noteworthy-Camp featured 34 fouls and four fouls-out. Goal helped Wolf Pack break game open after Bulldogs' 10-0, 9-point deficit.

Women's pool

Ocan Air Base, South Korea 4-1
Seoul American 5-0
Kunsan Air Base, South Korea 3-3
Camp Humphreys, South Korea 2-3
Suwon Air Base, South Korea 1-4

Tuesday's games

Seoul American 55, Suwon 41
Kunsan 81, Ocan 69

Women's double-elimination playoffs

Game 1-Camp Humphreys vs. Ocan
Game 2-Ocan Air Base, South Korea, 63, Yongsan Garrison, South Korea, 58
Game 3-Kunsan Air Base, South Korea, 58, Camp Humphreys 57

Wednesday's games

Game 4-Yongsan vs. Suwon
Game 5-Kunsan vs. Ocan
Game 6-Camp Humphreys vs. Game 4 winner

Thursday's games

Game 7-Game 5 loser vs. Game 6 winner
Game 8-Game 4 winner vs. Game 7 winner, if Game 5 winner vs. Game 6 winner

Tuesday's summaries

Camp Humphreys 57, Suwon 41. Leading scorers-Camp Humphreys: Wallace Butts 12, Daynaine Walker 10, Tenise Roberts 10, Suwon: Daynaine Walker 10, Tenise Roberts 10 (all second half); Suwon: Daynaine Walker 10, Tenise Roberts 10 (all second half); Suwon: Daynaine Walker 10, Tenise Roberts 10 (all second half).

Ocan 63, Yongsan 58

Half-time: Ocan 30, Yongsan 28. Leading scorers-Ocan: Tonya Holmes 15, Arlita Yee 15, Yongsan: Tonya Holmes 15, Arlita Yee 15 (three-point goals). Noteworthy-Ramun Rebels committed 16 first-half turnovers to help build a 34-18 lead after four minutes before halftime.

Kunsan 81, Suwon 57

Half-time: Kunsan 39, Suwon 28. Leading scorers-Kunsan: James Berts 20, Corie Fletcher 17, Suwon: Josh Smith 14, Quincy Randolph 12, Gaston Grey 10 (all second half); Suwon: Josh Smith 14, Quincy Randolph 12, Gaston Grey 10 (all second half).

Louisville's Petrino signs \$1 million-a-year deal

The Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Louisville football coach Bobby Petrino signed a contract Tuesday that will pay him \$1 million a year and a \$100,000 bonus if the Cardinals win the national championship.

The 43-year-old Petrino was making \$550,000 a year under his old contract. The new deal adds a \$50,000 bonus if the Cardinals reach the Bowl Championship Series title game and another \$50,000 if the Cardinals win it.

Louisville will join the Big East next season. The Cardinals were not eligible to automatically qualify for the BCS as members of Conference USA.

"That's what our goal is," Petrino said of the BCS. "It's certainly something that's out there for us and something we're committed to getting done."

The seventh-ranked Cardinals (10-1) earned the highest ranking in school history and led the nation in points and yards per game. Petrino has been mentioned as a candidate for several major

College football briefs

coaching jobs in the past month, but assured members of Louisville's athletics association board Tuesday morning that does not intend to leave.

The new contract, like the old one, runs through the 2010 season. Petrino will earn a \$1 million bonus if he stays through the 2007 season.

"I'm looking forward to the upcoming years," he said. "This is the place I want to be, this is the place my family wants to be."

Louisville athletic director Tom Jurich expects Petrino's name to be mentioned when high-profile jobs open.

"There are certainly schools out there that have more money than us," Jurich said. "But we're going to do everything in our power to keep everything stabilized here."

The Cardinals play No. 10 Boise State (11-0) in the Liberty Bowl on Dec. 31.

Ohio State suspends QB Smith for Alamo Bowl

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Ohio State quarterback Troy Smith was suspended on Monday for violating team and NCAA rules and will not play in next week's Alamo Bowl.

Coach Jim Tressell would not say what Smith did or when the violation occurred, but said the university became aware of the problem on Thursday.

"Obviously, he feels terrible that he didn't take care of his responsibilities," Tressell said.

Smith, a sophomore, will not travel with the team to San Anto-

nio for the Dec. 29 game against Oklahoma State.

Justin Zwick, a sophomore, will start. He had been the starter until he lost the job after mildly separating his left (non-throwing) shoulder in the sixth game of the season.

"I am aware of what is expected, both on and off the field, at Ohio State and I have fallen short of those expectations," Smith said in a statement.

Memphis gives West contract extension

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Memphis coach Tommy West agreed to a one-year contract extension after

leading the Tigers to back-to-back bowl games for the first time in the program's history.

West received the extension Monday while in Mobile, Ala., where the Tigers (8-3) play Bowling Green in the GMAC Bowl on Wednesday.

"I've made it very clear that this is what I wanted to happen," West said. "I'm really enthused and excited it's going to work out the way we wanted it to work out."

West's new contract runs through 2009 and raises his income to \$800,000 a year.

Memphis has won eight or more games two seasons in a row for the first time in 40 years.

Stanford-bound Harris stays committed to Pitt

BY ALAN ROSSIN

The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Pitt quarterback Tyler Palko clearly isn't happy with the Panthers' pending coaching change, saying it "stinks." Coach Walt Harris doesn't seem all that thrilled with it, either.

Harris, allowed to leave for Stanford last week in a move some players essentially consider a firing, acknowledged it is an emotional time as he prepares to coach the No. 19 Panthers in the Fiesta Bowl against No. 5 Utah on Jan. 1.

"Sure," Harris said Monday night. "I'm trying to act like it isn't, I guess because I think that's probably the way you're supposed to act. We were down at City Council today for University of Pittsburgh Football Day and it is very emotional. I spent eight years trying to rebuild this football program and I think we accomplished that."

Asked if he wished he were staying, Harris said, "I think those questions are, unfortunately, behind us now. I do love these players. I have told them how much they meant to me, and that life goes on."

Some players were more vocal about Harris' departure, especially Palko, who unsuccessfully lobbied Pitt's administration to give Harris a new contract. Harris was signed through 2006, but the school said the contract wouldn't be extended — an awkward situation that all but guaranteed a coaching change.

"It's a business and it's cut-throat and it stinks," said Palko, the son of a Pittsburgh-area high school coach. "But being around it my whole life, you understand this is part of the job."

"Coach Harris has been great.

He hasn't been selfish about anything, he's been all about the team and we appreciate that."

Harris' 25-12 record since 2002 is the best for a Pitt coach over a three-year span since Jackie Sherrill's teams went 33-3 from 1979-81. Still, athletic director Jeff Long said last week he couldn't say he was "disappointed" Harris is departing.

Long and Harris were not close, and Long was angered in mid-October when the coach's former agent demanded the school give Harris a new contract or let him seek another job.

Long interviewed Carolina Panthers assistant coach Sal Sunseri, a former Pitt assistant, on Monday and is winding down his search for Harris' replacement. Among those interviewed were Oklahoma assistant coach Bo Pelini, Baltimore Ravens assistant Matt Cavanaugh, New York Giants assistant Tim Lewis and Pitt defensive coordinator Paul Rhoads. Former Miami Dolphins coach Dave Wannstedt pulled out of consideration Thursday, saying he wasn't ready to take another job.

Pitt has signaled it wants to hire a coach before the players leave campus Thursday, but it wasn't certain Monday if Long is ready to recommend his choice to chancellor Mark A. Nordenberg.

Some Pitt players think they already have a good coach, and many remain confused about why Harris is leaving.

"I think when it happened, it was (a distraction), third-team All-America tackle Rob Pettitt said. "Now, we have our eye on the bull's-eye. Coach Harris said he wanted to coach us in a bowl game and wants to go out with a win, and I want to go out with a win. So we need to go and win now."

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Majerus decides he'd be shortchanging USC

Coach cites health concerns as reason for quickly backing out of job

BY KEN PETERS
The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — At the time, it seemed like a great idea.

Then, Rick Majerus thought it through.

After making a snap decision to take the Southern California coaching job last week, Majerus almost as quickly decided he shouldn't.

"Maybe you're married and Jennifer Aniston walks by and she says, 'C'mon, let's go,'" Majerus said, trying to draw a parallel with what he described as being blinded by the dream opportunity to coach the Trojans' basketball team.

Majerus apologized to the school, athletic director Mike Garrett and associate athletic director Daryl Gross on Monday in the room where he was introduced with much fanfare last Wednesday as the coach who would take over the team on April 1.

"I made a mistake. I'd be doing them a disservice and myself a disservice. Right now, I just can't

bring it," a glum Majerus said, citing health concerns for his decision to back out of the job.

Majerus, 56, has had seven heart bypasses and an ongoing battle with his weight, which has been as high as 370 pounds. He also cited health concerns when he retired as Utah's coach last January after 15 seasons, and has been working as an analyst for ESPN.

He said he decided immediately to take the USC job when he was offered it on Dec. 13, but had second thoughts as early as last Wednesday night.

"I looked at myself and thought that I was a phony. I realized they

"I made a mistake. I'd be doing them a disservice and myself a disservice. Right now, I just can't bring it."

Rick Majerus

That's not to say he's had any health problems recently.

"I think my health is good for probably anything other than to be an astronaut or a coach," he said. "I swam a mile and a quarter this morning just because I was so anxiety-ridden."

Assistant Jim Sals, made the interim head coach after Henry Bibby was fired four games into the season, will remain in the post for the rest of this season, Garrett said.

Garrett said the search for a coach will resume, although he has set no timetable.

Majerus, this time not spouting the one-liners that spiked up last week's news conference, seemed contrite and apologized several times.

"My selfishness in wanting this job and then my stupidity in thinking that I could undertake this, put Mike Garrett and Daryl Gross in an untenable position. My apologies," Majerus said.

Majerus, who plans to return to his ESPN job, guided Utah to the NCAA title game in 1998, losing to Kentucky, one of the "Use" 10 NCAA tournament appearances during his tenure.

Considered among the top candidates are Pepperdine coach Paul Westphal, a former USC star, and former Iowa State and Chicago Bulls coach Tim Floyd.



LOS ANGELES TIMES/AP
Rick Majerus announced on Monday he is backing out as Southern California's men's basketball coach less than a week after accepting the position. Majerus said he realized his health wouldn't allow him to put in the long work days he has in the past.

No. 7 Syracuse wins despite Cornell's 15 three-pointers

The Associated Press

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — Syracuse has 10 wins and just one loss — numbers that don't impress coach Jim Boeheim.

The seventh-ranked Orange allowed a Carrier Dome-record 15 three-pointers in an 82-69 victory over Cornell on Monday night.

"If we don't change, it'll be evident to everybody," said Boeheim, whose 2-3 zone defense has been the staple of a program that won the 2003 national championship.

"We're just not there," he said. "We can still win a game like this when we don't defend the three, but we're going to come to a time where we can't."

The Orange allowed that many threes only once before — in a 96-92 victory over Southern Illinois in the Midwest Regional semifinals in the 1995 NCAA tournament.

Syracuse was able to beat the Big Red (3-6) for the 28th consecutive time by using a press to force 17 turnovers, 11 on steals, in the second half.

The trick now is for the Orange to play the whole game the way they did the second half.

"We have to play intense," said Hakim Warrick, who had 19 points and 10 rebounds while fighting through double- and triple-teams all game. "The guys that have been as leaders have to go out there and start the game with intensity and the guys come off the bench will follow. It's something we have to do — set the tempo."

The last time Cornell beat Syracuse was on Dec. 4, 1968 — or eight years before Boeheim became head coach at his alma mater.

Cornell trailed 36-35 at half-

AP Men's Top 25

time on Monday and was dreaming of an upset every time someone hit from long range.

"We were excited at the end of the first half," said senior guard Cody Topper, who was 7-for-10 from three-point range and had 23 points and seven assists. "We knew we were in the game. We wanted to come out and slow it up in the second half and maintain our poise."

The Orange, whose only loss was to No. 3 Oklahoma State, scored 28 points off Cornell's 23 turnovers.

No. 21 Mississippi St. 104, Florida A&M 80: Lawrence Roberts scored 25 points and Winsome Frazier added 24 for the Bulldogs (10-2), who won their fourth straight. Shane Power added 18 points for Mississippi State, which shot 53 percent from the field and led by as many as 31.

Tony Tate had 17 points for the Rattlers (2-6), who played their eighth of nine straight road games to start the season. This was their third against a ranked team as they lost to No. 1 Illinois and No. 23 Michigan State by an average of 31.5 points.

No. 22 Cincinnati 95, Jackson St. 43: Eric Hicks had 18 points and freshman reserve Roy Bright had 12 points and 17 points and 11 rebounds for the Bearcats, who improved to 8-0 for the fifth time in the last 10 seasons. Coach Bob Huggins got his 550th career win, improving his record at Cincinnati to 382-119 in 16 seasons.

Antonio Williams-Parker had 12 points for the visiting Tigers (3-8), who shot 23.9 percent from the field and committed 24 turnovers.



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Owens: Offensive burden shifts to QB McNabb, RB Westbrook

OWENS, FROM BACK PAGE

"I don't think it is any step back too much with T.O. not being in there," McNabb said. "With those guys in there, we are still running our offense and those guys will have opportunities to make plays for us."

With Owens, the Eagles won their first nine games without conference opponents by double-digit margins, including five games by more than 20 points each.

Without him, they have to win two playoffs games against inferior teams in a weak conference to reach the Super Bowl.

Philadelphia's first playoff game on Jan. 15 or 16 could be against a team that finishes with a losing record.

Owens' presence on the field and personality in the locker room will be missed. But the Eagles are used to overcoming significant injuries.

In 2002, McNabb missed the last six games with a broken ankle.

Backup quarterback Koy Detmer and third-string A.J. Feeley led the Eagles to a 5-1 record down the stretch, before McNabb returned for the playoffs.

Last season, free safety Brian Dawkins, the defense's best player, missed nine games with neck injury, and Westbrook sat out the playoffs with torn triceps. Still, if McNabb hadn't injured his ribs in the NFC title game against Carolina, the Eagles might have beaten the Panthers.

"We'll make do without him, obviously, and the guys will step up and play," coach Andy Reid said.

The Eagles' offense now must rely on the arm and legs of McNabb and the hands and feet of Westbrook. McNabb proved this season he is a precision pocket passer, throwing for 3,839 yards, 30 TDs and only eight interceptions, while completing 63.7 per-

cent of his passes and compiling a 103.6 rating.

Known for his scrambling ability, McNabb hasn't had to run much, mainly because Owens always seemed open. But with Owens out Sunday, McNabb ran for gains of 12 and 19 yards in Philadelphia's winning drive against Dallas.

McNabb will have to resort to scrambling now to prevent defenses from focusing on Westbrook. None of the wide receivers warrants being double-teamed, so the Eagles have to hope for mismatches when Westbrook comes out of the backfield. They'll also need Westbrook to continue gaining plenty of yards on the ground.

There was a sense at times during the season that some players were tired of hearing Owens get most of the credit for the team's success, and some receivers complained they should get more passes.

Now it's their turn to prove themselves.



Lions holder Mick Harris lays on the ball after being tackled by Vikings cornerback Terrence Shaw on an extra point attempt. The point would have tied the game with 12 seconds left, but Minnesota won 28-27.

Break has Vikings snapping to attention

BY DAVE CAMPBELL
The Associated Press

EDEN PRAIRIE, Minn. — The Minnesota Vikings, in danger of watching their season come completely undone, finally got the big break they desperately needed.

"You take the wins any way you can get them," coach Mike Tice said Monday, less than 24 hours after a bad snap by Detroit's Ron Muhlback prevented the Lions from attempting the game-tying extra point with 8 seconds left and gave the Vikings a wild 28-27 victory.

A little more than three hours after that improbable finish, Green Bay (8-6) lost at home to Jacksonville and fell back into the first place with Minnesota in the NFC North.

That created a colossal matchup at the Metrodome for Friday afternoon, pitting the Packers against the Vikings for the division title. Tiebreakers assure that the winner will clinch, regardless of what happens in the regular season's final week.

"We're starting to kind of come back around here," offensive coordinator Scott Linehan said. "Hopefully we're peaking at the right time."

After the offense stalled throughout much of the second half, Daunte Culpepper led two long touchdown drives in the fourth quarter. He was asked, after the game, if the outcome proved that this year's team is different than the one that lost seven of its last 10 and missed the playoffs in 2003.

"I think it does show that," said Culpepper, who passed for 404 yards and three touchdowns. "We just kept fighting all the way till the end, no matter what. We had luck on our side. If you keep fighting, you have to get a break sometime."

Tice recalled a crazy play in last year's loss to the New York Giants that seemed to start the season-ending 3-7 slide. Clinging to a one-point fourth-quarter lead, Minnesota watched a blocked New York punt was scooped up by the Giants' Wesley Marshall — who ran 20 yards for a first down.

"That kind of snowballed our

**Green Bay at Minnesota
5 a.m. Saturday
AFL Sports**

Game time is Japan and Korea Standard. Guam is one hour ahead; Singapore and Hong Kong are one hour behind.

season last year and put the black cloud over us for a number of weeks," Tice said. "I don't think we've had that feeling at all this year. ... This team has battled until the end in every game. We haven't always come through with the play to win the game, with a stop to win the game, but we certainly have not got that 'Woe is me' feeling."

Though the Vikings forced three turnovers and held the Lions to 13 points until midway through the fourth quarter, the pass coverage remains a pressing concern. Joe Harrington, booted more than one time on Sunday, passed for a career-high 361 yards after throwing for only 47 against the Packers the week before.

Detroit's offense, now 27th in the league, totaled 463 yards and scored what should have been the tying touchdown by driving 80 yards in less than 1½ minutes.

"We've got to have enough confidence in ourselves defensively and get off the field somehow, some way, no matter what it takes," Tice said.

Getting cornerback Antoine Winfield (sprained ankle) back for the Green Bay game will help a lot. Winfield looked good in a workout Monday, according to Tice, and should help relieve the pressure on Brian Williams and Terrance Shaw.

Shaw struggled with dehydration and chest congestion, and Williams was worn out from playing defense and three special teams.

Backup Derek Ross struggled again, and safety Corey Chavous was forced to play cornerback in the dime defense on the Lions' final drive.

"I could go on for days about some things that I could have done better — but the bottom line is that we won the game," Chavous said. "That's all that matters to any of us in here right now."

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Raiders' Woodson arrested for public intoxication

The Associated Press

ALAMEDA, Calif. — Four-time Pro Bowl cornerback Charles Woodson and safety Marques Anderson were arrested early Monday for investigation of public intoxication following the Raiders' victory over the Tennessee Titans.

The Oakland Police Department said the players were arrested at 4:20 a.m. PST in downtown Oakland after refusing to leave the back seat of a woman's car. Both were briefly held by police spokeswoman Danielle Ashford said.

"Apparently what happened, an officer in our transportation section was flagged down by a woman who said the men were in the back of her car and wouldn't get out," said Ashford, who was uncertain whether the players knew the woman. "They were very uncooperative. They had problems maintaining their balance, bloodshot watery eyes and he was a strong odor of alcohol. They were acting in a belligerent manner."

Woodson, 28, and Anderson, 25, were booked into Oakland City Jail. Bail is not required for

the misdemeanor offense, Ashford said. But Anderson had to post \$5,000 because of an outstanding traffic violation. Both were released between 8 and 9 a.m., Ashford said.

Ashford didn't know when the players would appear in court. "It's a situation where you'd like your guys to not be in that situation," said coach Norv Turner, who has not spoken with Woodson or Anderson since the incident. "The thing we always talk about, those hours are where problems turn up. That's how you avoid them, by staying out of those situations. Again, I don't know a lot about exactly what happened, so I'd prefer not to comment on it until I do."

Woodson, designated as the Raiders' franchise player in February, didn't play during the 40-35 victory over the Titans because of an injured knee, but hustled through the locker room high-five teammates afterward.

He held out for four months trying the get a more lucrative contract but insisted in September there's more to be concerned with than a long-term deal. Such a deal could be in jeopardy.

He signed a one-year tender

NFL injury update

Injuries to prominent NFL players, followed by team's prognosis. (See Saturday's edition for complete injury report provided by the league):

Positive: QB Carson Palmer (sprained knee) questionable.
Ill: RB Willis McCubbee (hyperextended and bruised knee) status uncertain.
Seahawks: QB Matt Hasselbeck (elbow) questionable. LB Chad Brown (foot) expected to play.
Titans: RB Chris Brown (foot) will miss team's last two games.

for \$8.782 million after missing 33 days of training camp. Woodson has 74 tackles, 2½ sacks and two forced fumbles this season.

He hadn't missed a game since being suspended and sent home by former coach Bill Callahan for the final game last season at San Diego for missing curfew.

Turner hasn't had any significant issues with Woodson.

Anderson was acquired in a September trade with Green Bay.

Ramsey will begin next season as Redskins' starting QB

ASHBURN, Va. — Patrick Ramsey has already won next season's quarterback competition for the Washington Redskins.

Coach Joe Gibbs said Monday that Ramsey will be the starter to

begin the 2005 season, and he expects Mark Brunell to remain with the team as a high-priced backup.

"We're starting with Patrick," Gibbs said. "That's who we're going with. He's our guy. We're hoping he continues to progress."

Ramsey has completed 65 percent of his passes, with five touchdowns and three interceptions and an 83.3 rating in five starts since replacing Brunell. The Redskins are 2-3 in those games, losing to Philadelphia twice and Pittsburgh.

"When somebody goes in and starts playing good, the way I look at it, he's earned the right," Gibbs said. "That started from the first day he went in there and started playing good. I'm kind of reluctant to pull guys in and out, so I kind of give him a shot and we're going until something would happen to tell me that, hey, we need to make a change."

The Redskins paid a high price for Brunell in the offseason, trading a third-round draft pick to Jacksonville for him and then signing him to a seven-year, \$43 million contract with an \$8.6 million signing bonus.

Martz denies he's resigning

ST. LOUIS — As bleak as the situation looks, Rams coach Mike Martz isn't giving up.

Martz, whose fifth season with the team has been disastrous, on Monday had a strong rebuttal to an ESPN report he might consider quitting. The Rams were among the preseason NFC favorites after going 12-4 last year, but are 6-8.

"I would never resign from this job," Martz said. "I love this job and I would never leave these guys. We've got a real solid crew of young players and it's going to eventually be a terrific team, and I'm not going to ever walk away from something like that."

Martz has two years left on a contract that pays him \$3.5 million annually.

"I coach because I want to coach, and I love being here," Martz said. "That hasn't changed. We're going to forge on and we're going to keep up and running the way it should be."

Martz is 51-32, including playoff games. He was the offensive coordinator in 1999, when the Rams won their first Super Bowl. He led the Rams to a 14-2 record and a Super Bowl loss in 2002.

Darius fined \$75,000 for clothesline hit

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Jacksonville safety Donovan Darius was fined \$75,000 by the NFL on Tuesday for a hit across the neck of Green Bay's Robert Ferguson that left the wide receiver temporarily paralyzed.

Darius, who was ejected from the game, wasn't suspended because league disciplinarian Gene Washington said this was the first time he had been fined for a violation.

The hit came during the fourth quarter of Jacksonville's 28-25 victory at Green Bay. Ferguson caught a pass over the middle, and Darius hit him across the helmet and neck with a forearm. Ferguson regained feeling in his legs after he was hospitalized. He remained in the hospital Sunday and Monday nights.

He was released on Tuesday. Darius said in a statement that he spoke with Ferguson on Monday.

"We had a good conversation in which he

told me he has no hard feelings," Darius said. "We agreed that it was a part of the game. The most important thing is that Robert is OK."

Darius, whose annual salary is more than \$4 million a season, was ejected from the game by referee Ed Hochuli.

"You violently and unnecessarily struck your opponent in the neck and head area with your forearm," Washington said in his letter to Darius.

Packers quarterback Brett Favre said he expected a heavy fine.

"I don't know him personally. He seems like a good guy and it's an unfortunate hit," Favre said. "And his comments were he was going for the ball. Maybe he was. Maybe his sole intention was to knock the ball out, but he just didn't seem like it."

"You'd like to think that you'd ruin a guy's career, and Fergie, by all accounts, will come back from it. But mentally will he be the same? I don't know."

Jacksonville coach Jack Del Rio defended his player on Monday, saying Darius never intended to hurt Ferguson.

"It was a nasty shot, but I don't believe his intent was to headbutt the guy," Del Rio said. "Our thoughts and prayers are with Robert Ferguson. My understanding is he's doing OK up there and everything's going to be all right. But it was a scary situation and a very serious situation."

"[Darius] plays a physical brand of football, but he plays within the rules. He did not go helmet to helmet. He did not project himself or launch himself into the guy. He attempted to club at the football and ended up clubbing the guy in the head. It should be flagged and it was."

"If he really wanted to hurt the guy, he would launch himself and he would go helmet on helmet and really kill the guy."

Green Bay coach Mike Sherman called the hit "a cheap shot."



Green Bay's Robert Ferguson (left) was knocked unconscious and was temporarily paralyzed below the waist.



Top Scores for Week 15

250	berkster
238	dolphinfan
232	mukat
230	PilgrimPride
230	chisel44express
226	dispead
220	BIGLEW30
220	YO' HERO
220	ArJay
220	what time is it ?

CEC
Doddys Dollars Elem.
Yokosuka
Yokosuka
35 CES Misawa
Camp Aconcada
MRB9
Camp Huggins
Camp Zama
nat atsuji

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2600
2598
2596
2596
2586
2576
2572
2558
2556

giants#1
STEELFROGWOOD
Jaguar One
Jack58
Who Cares
Bone-Daddy
Joe Corleone
BengalsAtTheWay
NEOBIT
chargers

hbc 2/37 rr
MAG-12
DoDds
422 ABS RAF Croughton
MNF-I DCSPER
HQ, USAREUR, G2
Misawa
EC2-JAC-DSTE
USFJ
napra

See websites for official game rules.

Check this space every Thursday during the entire NFL season for the weeks Top Scores and Best Overall Scores during the NFL Challenge.

STARS AND STRIPES

OCONUS .com

NFL scoreboard

American Conference

East	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-New England	12	2	0	.857	293	246
N.Y. Jets	8	6	0	.571	297	206
Buffalo	8	6	0	.571	330	248
Miami	11	0	0	.100	242	317
South	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Indianapolis	11	3	0	.786	474	287
Jacksonville	8	6	0	.571	248	253
Houston	8	6	0	.571	274	317
Tennessee	4	10	0	.286	304	383
North	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Pittsburgh	13	0	0	.929	323	220
Baltimore	8	6	0	.571	280	225
Cincinnati	6	8	0	.429	312	340
Cleveland	3	11	0	.214	247	366
West	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-San Diego	11	3	0	.786	381	262
Denver	8	6	0	.571	311	274
Kansas City	6	8	0	.429	435	381
Oakland	5	9	0	.357	284	388

National Conference

East	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Pittsburgh	13	0	0	.929	323	220
Dallas	5	9	0	.357	256	367
N.Y. Giants	5	9	0	.357	253	300
Washington	5	9	0	.357	269	324
South	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Atlanta	11	3	0	.786	301	283
Carolina	6	8	0	.429	300	298
New Orleans	6	8	0	.429	301	374
Tampa Bay	5	9	0	.357	274	255
North	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
y-Green Bay	8	6	0	.571	359	335
Minnesota	8	6	0	.571	356	340
Chicago	5	9	0	.357	204	281
Detroit	5	9	0	.357	256	313
West	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Seattle	7	7	0	.500	219	292
San Francisco	6	8	0	.429	257	356
Arizona	5	9	0	.357	251	291
San Francisco	7	12	0	.364	242	390

Saturday games

Pittsburgh 31, N.Y. Giants 17

Washington 26, San Diego 16

Atlanta 34, Carolina 31, OT

Chicago 5, Houston 24

Minnesota 26, Detroit 27

N.Y. Jets 37, Seattle 14

Kansas City 45, Denver 17

San Diego 21, Cincinnati 17

Philadelphia 12, Dallas 7

San Francisco 20, Tampa Bay 15

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Dolphins rally to stun Patriots

Brady's INTs help Miami erase 11-point hole in 2:07

BY TIM REYNOLDS

The Associated Press

MIAMI — Miami already knew it would be home for the playoffs. The Dolphins might have also ensured that New England will have to win on the road to reach another Super Bowl.

A.J. Feeley's 21-yard touchdown pass to Derritus Thompson on fourth-and-10 with 1:23 remaining capped Miami's stirring comeback on an 11-point deficit in the final three minutes, sealing a stunning 28-28 victory over the Patriots on Monday night.

Tom Brady had three touchdown passes for New England (12-2), but also had four interceptions — including one that led to Miami's winning score. It was New England's second loss in 29 games, but one that means Pittsburgh needs to win one of its final two games to claim home-field advantage for the AFC playoffs.

Miami improved to 3-11 and avoided — temporarily, perhaps — setting a franchise record for losses in a season.

"We could easily have 10 wins right now, but things haven't fallen for us like they should of," said linebacker Brendon Ayanbadejo, who made the pivotal interception in his first career start. "But tonight, who cares what happened the last 13, 14 weeks of the season? We just beat the defending Super Bowl champions. That's all that matters."

Brady's third touchdown pass, a 2-yarder to Daniel Graham with 3:59 left, put the Patriots ahead 28-17 and seemed to wrap up a

victory for the visitors. Heads drooped on the Miami sideline, and fans who braved an unseasonable 52-degree night in South Florida began making their way to the exit.

They missed the highlight of Miami's season.

Sammy Morris' 1-yard run, his second touchdown of the game, capped a seven-play, 68-yard drive that drew Miami within 28-23 with 2:07 left.

And then Brady made an uncharacteristic mistake. Instead of just taking a sack by Jason Taylor on third down and resigning New England to punting the ball, he spun and threw blind into the end zone.

"It's just not a good play, and if we want to win these games, we can't do that," said Brady, who fell to 5-3 against Miami. "We've got to play better and it starts with me. I've got to go out and play better."

Added Taylor: "Was I surprised he threw it? I was. But I was glad he did."

Ayanbadejo caught it with ease, and moments later, the Dolphins scored and salvaged some pride from a lost season. Feeley's throw to Thompson was perfect, in a position where only he could catch it — and where defensive back Troy Brown had no chance. Feeley finished 22-for-35 for 198 yards, one touchdown and no interceptions.

"It's a testament to A.J. Feeley and what he's done for us all year," said safety Sammy Knight, who had two interceptions. "He's had some hard times, some tough



Dolphins defensive end Jason Taylor sacks Patriots quarterback Tom Brady late in the fourth quarter. Miami intercepted Brady four times, including twice in the final three minutes that helped Miami rally.

times, but tonight he hung in there, made some crucial throws, made some crucial plays for us."

Brady's fourth interception sailed to Arturo Freeman with 58 seconds left, and Miami ran out the clock.

"We just didn't get it done in any phase of the game," Patriots coach Bill Belichick said. "It certainly wasn't any one play. It was a combination of a lot of things and for the most part, they were in Miami's favor — especially at the end."

The Patriots lost despite a 121-yard rushing performance by Corey Dillon, and they lost after

leading at halftime for the first time in 32 games. Dillon ran for one touchdown and caught a pass from Brady for another.

Kevin Faulk also had a touchdown catch, a 31-yarder that started the scoring and extended New England's NFL-record streak of games scoring first to 19 — 22 including last year's playoff run. "We can't fault anybody but ourselves," Patriots safety Rodney Harrison said. "We had the lead with four minutes to go and we blew it away."

Travis Minor had a 1-yard scoring run for Miami, which beat New England for the first time in the team's past five meetings.

Interim coach Bates makes pitch for full-time job

Monday
Dolphins 28, Patriots 28

New England	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Miami	3	7	1	.273	18	28

NE — Faulk 31 pass from Brady (Vianiteri kick), 9:59.

Miami — Morris 1 run (Mack kick), 6:30.

Second Quarter

Miami — Dillon 3 run (Mack kick), 7:01.

Miami — FG Mack 3:52.

Third Quarter

Miami — Minor 1 run (Mack kick), 6:50.

Miami — Dillon 2 pass from Brady (Vianiteri kick), 2:07.

Fourth Quarter

NE — Graham 7 pass from Brady (Vianiteri kick), 3:59.

Miami — Morris 1 run (pass failed), 2:07.

Miami — Thompson 21 pass from Feeley (pass failed), 1:23.

A-73,629.

Individual Statistics

First downs 24-18

Net Yards Rushed- yards 38-166

Passing 159-179

Punt Return 17-187

Kickoff Returns 6-111

Sacked-Yards Lost 0-0

Com-Att Int 18-29-4

Punts 4-42.8

Punt Returns 14-61

Penalties-Yards 4-53

Time of Possession 35:06-24:54

Individual Statistics

Rushing New England 18-29-417

Passing New England 18-29-417

Receiving New England Patten 60

Blocked New England 1-1

BY STEVEN WINE

The Associated Press

DAVIE, Fla. — Miami Dolphins interim coach Jim Bates wore a suit to work Tuesday, dressed for success — and a big job interview — barely 12 hours after his team beat the Super Bowl champion New England Patriots.

Bates met with owner Wayne Huizenga at the team complex, hoping to remain head coach next season.

"Believe me, I've got a sales pitch ready," Bates said.

He remained a long shot for the job, with an offer to LSU coach Nick Saban perhaps imminent. The only other confirmed candidate is Oakland Raiders coach Art Shell.

Bates strengthened his case Monday night when the Dolphins scored two touchdowns in the final 2:07 and upset New England 28-28. With the improbable comeback, Miami (3-11) improved to 2-3 since coach Dave Wannstedt resigned.

"It says a lot about the team," quarterback A.J. Feeley said. "It says a lot about coach A.J. ... The guys in the locker room adore him."

Players say Bates has brought to the job intense enthusiasm that has kept the Dolphins from quitting this season. When Arturo Freeman made an interception in the final minute to clinch Monday's victory, he was

greeted on the sideline by Bates with a flying chest bump.

The 58-year-old coach said he didn't fear hurting himself.

"I was worried about hurting Arturo," Bates joked.

Bates last held a head coaching job in 1985, when he led the San Antonio Gunslingers of the USFL. His only other seasons as a head coach were in 1969-71 at Severn County High School in Tennessee.

But the longtime defensive assistant has worked with such successful coaches as Bill Belichick, Frank Kush and Johnny Majors.

He even has ties with Saban — both were assistants with the Cleveland Browns in 1991-93.

"I have a tremendous amount of confidence in what I can do," Bates said.

With little to motivate them except pride, the Dolphins have played better since Bates was promoted from defensive coordinator.

The biggest upgrade has been on offense, with Miami averaging 23.8 points per game under Bates, compared with 13.7 in the first nine games.

"People say we're a different team under him, and it's true," tight end Randy McMichael said. "I will play for that man anywhere, any day of the week."

The offensive line, the team's biggest weakness this season, has blocked better in recent



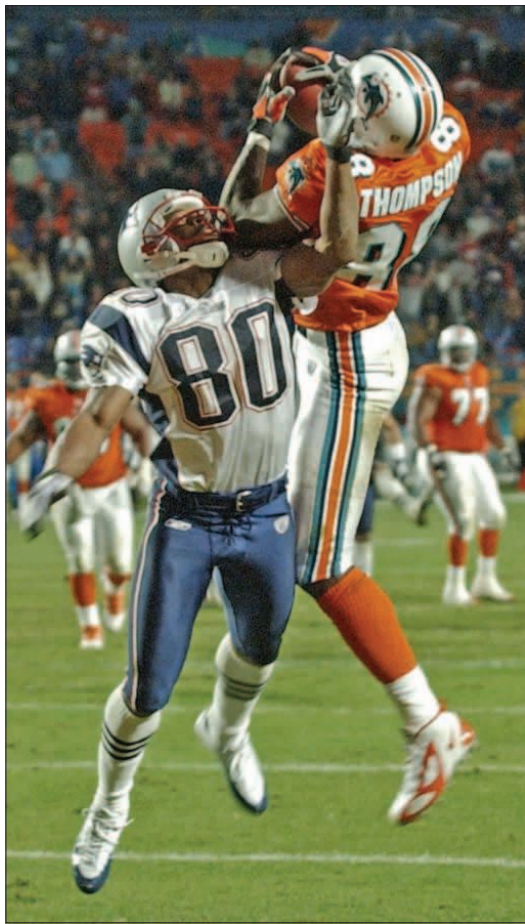
Dolphins interim coach Jim Bates celebrates Miami's victory over New England on Monday, the night before Bates' interview for the job.

weeks. And there are signs of progress by Feeley, who made it through a start without an interception for the first time Monday.

"The mark of this team over the past five weeks has been improvement and playing hard," Bates said. "It's a credit to a lot of people, with all the adversity and all the different stories that are coming out, that these guys have stayed focused and tried to win games down the stretch."

SPORTS

Stunning Fin-ish



AP
Miami's Derrius Thompson (88) catches a 21-yard, game-winning TD pass with 1:23 left in the game as New England's Troy Brown (80) defends on Monday. See details of the Dolphins' 29-28 victory on Page 39.



Majerus apologizes to USC:
'Right now, i just can't
bring it,' Page 36



DALLAS MORNING NEWS/AP

Eagles receiver Terrell Owens is helped to the locker room after being injured early in the third quarter against Dallas on Sunday. Owens needs surgery on his ankle and will miss the rest of the regular season.

More than T.O. show?

Owens' injury gives Eagles' other stars chance to shine

BY ROB MAADDI
The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Terrell Owens invigorated the Philadelphia Eagles with his attitude, enthusiasm and MVP-type performance.

Donovan McNabb and Brian Westbrook will do their best to prove this wasn't a one-man offense.

A badly sprained ankle and broken leg will sideline Owens for the rest of the regular season and possibly the entire postseason — a devastating blow for a team that dominated the NFC and clinched home-field advantage throughout the playoffs with two games left.

But take heart, Philly fans: losing the brash-talking, playmaking wide receiver doesn't end the Eagles' chances of reaching the Super Bowl for the first time in 24 years.

Owens isn't the only reason Philadelphia is 13-1.

The Eagles still have McNabb and Westbrook on offense, and Jevon Kearse leads the stingiest defense in the NFL. No team has allowed fewer points (202).

"They will be fine," said Owens, who has an outside chance of playing in the Super

Bowl if the Eagles make it. "It doesn't stop with me."

While Owens was catching passes, criticizing coaches and teammates and inventing innovative touchdown celebrations in San Francisco, the Eagles reached the past three NFC championship games.

A lackluster receiving corps was a major reason they didn't win one, but these Eagles are in better position to finally get to the NFL title game — even without Owens, who had 77 receptions for 1,200 yards and a team-record 14 TD catches.

McNabb is having the best season of his six-year career, and Westbrook has emerged as one of the most dangerous running backs in the league. The revamped defense is championship-caliber.

Sure, receivers Todd Pinkston, Freddie Mitchell, Greg Lewis and seldom-used Billy McMullen are ordinary. But tight ends Chad Lewis and L.J. Smith are go-to targets for McNabb, while opponents still haven't found a way to stop Westbrook, who has 812 yards rushing and 73 catches for 703 yards.

SEE OWENS ON PAGE 37

MLB requests more paperwork on Johnson deal

Page 35

